

M621
Junctions 1 to 7 Improvement Scheme
Public Consultation Report

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Executive summary

SCHEME OVERVIEW

The Road Investment Strategy (RIS 1) for the 2015-2020 Road Period, published by the Department for Transport (DfT) in December 2014, announced the M621 Junctions 1 to 7 Improvement Scheme to be taken forward for development. The purpose of the scheme is to improve local and strategic access throughout this congested section of the road network.

Following some initial scheme development work, three potential options were presented at non-statutory public consultation.

THE CONSULTATION

Highways England ran a public consultation for six weeks, between 04 September and 15 October 2017.

Three public consultation events were held during the consultation period, which 33 people attended.

A public consultation brochure, including questionnaire, was delivered to approximately 7,800 residences and businesses in the local area in addition to key stakeholders such as Local Councillors and Members of Parliament (MPs). This was also made available at events during the consultation period.

The public consultation brochure was made available online, along with an online version of the questionnaire. Responses to the consultation were accepted through a number of channels:

- Online at www.highways.gov.uk/m621j1-7
- Email: M621J1to7@highwaysengland.co.uk
- Post, using the free post envelope provided with the consultation brochure

Promotion of the consultation included regional media coverage and social media posts through official Highways England Twitter account.

CONSULTATION FINDINGS

A total of 123 responses were received during the consultation period. This comprised of 105 questionnaires and 18 comments received through emails or letters. The questionnaire requested that people supply a valid postcode. Where the information provided could be identified as a valid postcode, 54% of responses had come from the 'Local' area. This is defined as having come from a postcode which is based within the area that brochures and paper questionnaires were distributed. See Appendix A1.

Responses were received from different demographic groups in the population. Three quarters of responses were from males, and almost two-thirds (64%) of returned questionnaires had been completed by people aged 45 or older.

A high majority of respondents (81%) identified that they agreed that "something should be done to improve reliability and reduce congestion on the M621". Whilst over half of

respondents (56%) strongly agreed with the statement, demonstrating a strong recognition of the concerns identified by Highways England.

Option C was the most popular option of the three options presented in the consultation, preferred by 46% of respondents. Approximately one quarter of respondents (27%) indicated that they did not prefer any of the options, whilst Option A was selected by 13% of respondents; Option B was the least popular selected by less than one in 10 respondents (8%).

Each of the scheme proposals included closing junction 2a westbound (anti-clockwise). The survey results demonstrated that:

- 51% of respondents use this link at least once a week;
- 23% use it daily;
- 83% of respondents identified they understood the reasons for to closing the slip road at junction 2a;
- 53% of respondents supported the proposal;
- 30% of respondents did not support the proposal.

The questionnaire provided opportunities for respondents to add open text alongside the multiple-choice questions. In addition, a number of open text responses were received by the Project Team via letters and emails. The comments offered a range of views. In addition to comments which reinforced support for the proposals, there were concerns from local residents about reduced access to Beeston and the impact that closing junction 2a westbound (anti-clockwise) will have on the local road network, as traffic is diverted. Several comments queried specific details of the proposals, or suggested alternative approaches.

NEXT STEPS

The feedback received from the consultation will be used to inform the selection process of the preferred option alongside economic and environmental assessment work.

We expect to announce our preferred option, known as Preferred Route Announcement, in spring 2018. Once our preferred route has been announced we will begin developing our preliminary design, which will include carrying out further surveys.

Further assessment will be undertaken to understand the effects of the proposed closure of junction 2a on the local roads. This will include more detailed modelling which looks at changes in traffic behaviour as a result of the closure. Once this has been done, we will then be able to consider, what, if any, mitigations we may need to implement.

We will also carry out further assessments which will take account of potential environmental impacts and design any mitigation to tackle adverse changes.

Since the consultation period we have undertaken pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian counts around junctions 2 and 7 following the consultation period, to facilitate a better understanding of the current usage of Non-Motorised User (NMU) crossing points. We will analyse the results further and will consider the potential for any improvements which could be made to existing NMU facilities.

Once we have completed our preliminary design we will publish our proposals under the Highways Act 1980, this is known as publishing our draft orders. This is the start of the statutory planning process and another public consultation will be held after our draft orders are published.

Subject to successfully completing all of the necessary statutory processes and the scheme remaining value for money, it is expected that construction work will start in 2020. As the scheme is in its early stages of design, the construction plan is still under development however, it is expected that construction will be completed by 2022.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This document reports the findings from public consultation regarding the proposed M621 Junctions 1 to Improvement Scheme, which has been produced at Project Control Framework (PCF) Stage 2 (Option Selection).

The purpose of this document is to explain:

- The nature of information offered to the public;
- The manner in which this information was presented; and
- To summarise the views raised at the consultation events and during the consultation period.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE SCHEME

The M621 runs from junction 27 of the M621 to junction 43 of the M1 and serves the centre of Leeds and surrounding areas. The M621 Junctions 1 to 7 Improvement Scheme includes technology upgrades to the full M621 corridor, but with the majority of improvements proposed between junctions 1 to junction 4.

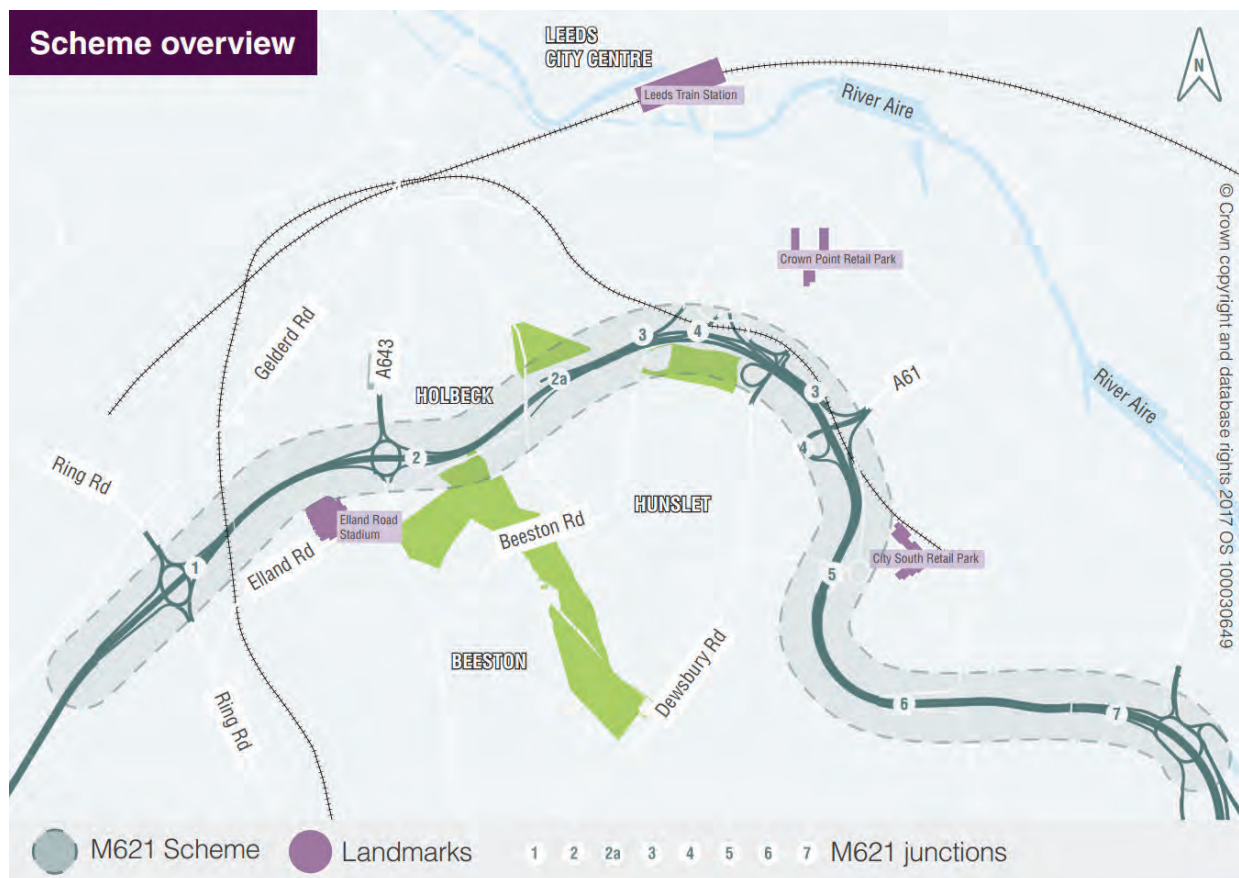


Figure 1 Scheme location plan

Highways England identified that congestion and reliability issues affect the M621 and in 2014 the Government proposal to improve the M621 between junctions 1 and 7 as part of their first Road Investment Strategy.

1.3 OPTION IDENTIFICATION

Highways England have considered ways to improve the M621, and identified three potential options for the public consultation, following an initial sifting of potential solutions using the Early Assessment and Sifting Tool ('EAST')¹. These three options were all considered to meet the scheme objectives, which are as follows:

- Increase capacity and improve journey time reliability;
- Improve the safety of the scheme corridor for road users;
- Provide better and real-time information to road users;
- Avoid and mitigate potential environmental impacts of the scheme and enhance, where possible, the built and natural environment; and
- Support Leeds City Council's development plans including updates to the Leeds transport network, where possible.

The three potential options identified can be summarised as follows:

Option A

- The introduction of free-flowing connections between the M621 and the A643 at junction 2;
- Adding an additional lane to the roundabout at junction 2;
- Providing two lanes through junction 3 westbound (anti-clockwise), instead of one lane at present;
- Changing junction 3 westbound to give priority to the main M621 traffic and reducing the on-slip to one lane, creating a junction where traffic merges from the on-slip road on the right-hand side of the carriageway;
- Adding a third lane between junction 2 and 3 westbound by converting the existing hard shoulder and auxiliary lanes;
- Closure of junction 2a westbound to enable the improvements at junction 3; and
- Providing improved motorway technology along the M621 corridor.

Option B

Option B includes all the improvements of Option A, plus the following:

- Adding a third lane in each direction between junctions 1 and 2 by converting the hard shoulder into a lane for traffic.

¹ EAST is a decision support tool that has been developed as a part of the transport appraisal toolkit to quickly summarise and present evidence on options in a clear and consistent format. It helps inform an early view of how options perform and compare and assist in identifying more suitable options from a long list.

Option C

Option C includes all the improvements of Options A and B, plus the following:

- Adding a third lane between junctions 2 and 4 eastbound (clockwise) by converting the existing hard shoulder into a lane for traffic. This will include changing junction 2a on-slip and junction 3 off-slip to a standard junction, to enable the existing auxiliary lane to form part of the additional third lane.

Further details, including diagrams, of each option can be found in the consultation brochure, included as Appendix A2.

1.4 PROPOSED CLOSURE OF JUNCTION 2A WESTBOUND

The proposed closure of M621 junction 2a westbound (anti-clockwise) is common to all three proposed options. Justification for this closure is provided below.

A key aim of the M621 improvement scheme is to improve journey time reliability by addressing the causes of congestion on the M621. Alongside this, another aim is to maintain the highest possible level of safety for those using the M621. All three options include an alteration to the westbound junction 3 on-slip and the closure of the junction 2a off-slip road.

At present, the westbound on-slip road at junction 3 is two lanes wide with the main M621 traffic being reduced to one lane. This causes significant congestion during peak periods. To help improve the operation of this junction it has been proposed to reduce the on-slip road to one lane and widen the main M621 carriageway to two lanes, westbound traffic will join in the outside lane.

Traffic intending to join at junction 3 and leave at junction 2a would need to cross two lanes of traffic in a very short distance. This manoeuvre is potentially unsafe and therefore junction 2a is proposed to be closed. An increase in capacity at junction 2 will be made to enable additional traffic to use this instead of junction 2a.

The closure of junction 2a leads to:

- A safer road environment for traffic leaving the M621 at junction 3;
- A safer environment for the traffic on the mainline of the M621; and
- Smoother traffic flow through the section, leading to less congestion and more reliable journey times.

2 THE CONSULTATION

2.1 CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

Our public consultation was undertaken during a six-week period, between 04 September and 15 October 2017.

The objectives of the public consultation events were to provide the local residents with the following:

- An overview of the of the M621 Junctions 1 to 7 Improvement Scheme;
- An explanation of the proposed closure of junction 2A westbound;
- An understanding of why the closure may be needed;
- An opportunity for the public and stakeholders to provide feedback and opinions on the proposed improvements;
- An explanation as to the next steps in the project's progression; and
- How issues and concerns can be raised to Highways England.

A consultation questionnaire was developed to gather opinions on the proposals. This was made available for completion online. Paper copies of the questionnaire were also included as a part of an information brochure developed to support the consultation activities.

Three public consultation events were held as follows:

- Hillside Enterprise Centre – Friday 08 September 2017 (1pm–8pm);
- Hillside Enterprise Centre – Saturday 09 September 2017 (10am-4pm);
- St Matthew's Community Centre – Saturday 16 September (10am-4pm).

In addition, a dignitary event was held on Thursday 07 September.

The brochures containing information on the proposals and a paper version of the questionnaire were available at these events.

Responses to the consultation were accepted through a number of channels:

- Online at: www.highways.gov.uk/m621j1-7
- Email: M621J1to7@highwaysengland.co.uk
- Post, using the free post envelope provided with the consultation brochure
- At public consultation events, by completing a paper or online copy of the questionnaire.

A number of electronic tablets were available at the consultation events to provide an easier, alternative method of completing the questionnaires. The tablets also provided a benefit to Highways England when interpreting responses.

A copy of the brochure is attached as Appendix A2, and a copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix A3.

2.2 CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire included six questions related to the M621 Junctions 1 to 7 Improvement Scheme and the proposed scheme options. Whilst each question included a 'closed' set of defined options, some questions included the opportunity for supporting open text comments. Where open text responses were provided, these have been analysed with common themes identified.

People completing a questionnaire were also asked to indicate if they had attended at least one of the consultation events.

A further three questions requested details on gender, age and disabilities, to provide and understanding of the population responding to the consultation.

2.3 PUBLICISING THE CONSULTATION

The consultation was advertised across a range of mediums. six interviews were carried out with the press including: BBC Radio Leeds, Radio Aire, Look North, Made in Leeds, Yorkshire Evening Post and the Huddersfield Examiner. A press release describing the consultation was issued to all media outlets in West Yorkshire resulting in articles also being published in South Leeds Life and on the ITV website.

A series of social media posts were also published by Highways England on their official Twitter account, advertising the consultation events in the days prior to them occurring.

In addition, over 7,800 brochures were posted to residents and key businesses within the vicinity of the scheme area (see Appendix A1) and to West Yorkshire Local Authorities. These brochures included the paper copies of the consultation questionnaire, with recipients encouraged to complete and return by freepost.

Consultation materials and letters were also sent to key stakeholders such as; environmental bodies, emergency services, affected landowners, Local Councillors and MPs to highlight the upcoming consultation events and invite formal feedback. These included the following:

- Leeds City Council Planning Authority
- Leeds City Council Highways Authority
- HS2
- Natural England
- Historic England
- The Environment Agency
- National Road User Committee
- Transport for the North
- West Yorkshire Police
- West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Yorkshire Ambulance Service
- Morley Town Council
- Leeds Chamber of Commerce
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority
- Leeds United Football Club
- Yorkshire County Cricket Club

- Leeds Rhinos

In addition to this, key disability groups were contacted and invited to share their views on the M621 proposals. The following disability groups were contacted:

- Vulnerable Road User Committee (VRUC)
- Leeds City Council Accessibility and Usability Group
- Access Committee for Leeds

2.4 ATTENDANCE AT CONSULTATION EVENTS

Members of the project team attended the consultation events to provide further information, answer questions and listen to public feedback.

In addition to the Project Team, the consultation events were also attended by members of Leeds City Council. As one of the scheme objectives is to support Leeds City Council with their development plans, Highways England have been working closely with Leeds to ensure the M621 improvements align with their wider transport strategy. It was therefore considered beneficial for Leeds to attend to answer any queries in relation to their plans for the local road network.

The consultation events were attended, as follows:

- Hillside Enterprise Centre – Friday 08 September 2017 – 16 members of the public, 13 Highways England employees and two Leeds City Council employees
- Hillside Enterprise Centre – Saturday 09 September 2017 – seven members of the public, 10 Highways England employees and one Leeds City Council employee.
- St Matthew's Community Centre – Saturday 16 September – 10 members of the public, 11 Highways England employees and one Leeds City Council employee.

The dignitary event on Thursday 07 September 2017 was attended by Councillor Neil Dawson of Morley South Ward.

The venues and locations of all the consultation events were discussed and agreed with the local authority. St Matthew's Community Centre was requested as a venue by local ward councillors due to its accessible location for the surrounding community.

2.5 FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION EVENTS

To gather feedback on the public consultation events, attendees were asked to complete a short survey to record their experiences. Of the 33 people who attended the consultation events, 21 people completed an Event Exit Survey. The results of the Exit Survey are presented in Appendix A4.

The feedback collected through the exit surveys was generally positive. 95% of completed surveys indicated the chosen event was convenient, and all surveys indicated the information presented by the project team was useful.

Question 5 of the Event Exit Survey asked the public if they had 'Any other comments regarding the effectiveness of our consultation itself'. The comments were as follows:

- There was some feedback that additional venues could have been used;
- Requests were made for the provision of refreshments for the public attending the events;
- Many residents commented that those staff acting on behalf of Highways England were very helpful and available to ask for clarifications;
- It was mentioned that a helpful explanation was provided of what's involved in the M621 improvements and why these are necessary;
- Good maps and photos on the walls were provided to help place the highway junctions; and
- The venue chosen was accessible and the exhibition was well set out.

All responses collected will be used to inform future project consultation methods including; event locations, the advertisement methods used and the consultation materials on display at events.

2.6 ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

During the consultation period, a number of stakeholders contacted Highways England to request a meeting to provide additional clarification. Members of the Project Team met stakeholders, as requested, to discuss any concerns that may have been raised. The following additional consultation activities took place within the consultation period:

- Holbeck Residents Meeting, Tuesday 03 October 2017;
- Beeston Community Forum, Thursday 05 October 2017; and
- Asda Stores Limited, Thursday 05 October 2017.

3 PROFILE OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

3.1 OVERVIEW OF RESPONSES

There were 105 questionnaires returned during the consultation period. These can be summarised as follows:

- One third (34%) were online responses (36 respondents)
- Two thirds (66%) were postal responses (69 respondents)

3.2 GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE OF RESPONSES

The questionnaire requested that people supply a valid postcode, to assist the project team identify the geographic coverage of the responses. Of the 105 questionnaires:

- Over three quarters (79%) of questionnaires (83) contained a valid postcode, supporting the mapping of responses; and
- 22 respondents did not provide a postcode (21%).

To identify differing views between the local residents (living within the study area) and people attending from outside the study area, the 83 mapped questionnaires have been further sub-categorised into 'Local' and 'Wider'. A 'Local' response is defined as having come from a postcode which is based within the study area (that brochures and paper questionnaires were distributed- see Appendix A1). People based outside of this area are considered as 'Wider'. In total:

- 45 of the 83 mapped questionnaires are based within the 'Local' area (54%); and
- 38 of the 83 mapped questionnaires are based within the 'Wider' area (46%).

The 83 questionnaire responses which provided a valid postcode have been mapped, and responses to this question are presented in Appendix A5.

3.3 GENDER

The questionnaire asked respondents to provide their gender. Three quarters of respondents identified themselves as male.

Table 1 Questionnaire responses by gender

	Q - Your gender			
	Male	Female	Prefer not to say	No answer provided
Total	76	25	0	4
Percentage	75%	25%	0%	-

3.4 AGE

The respondents were asked to indicate their age, by choosing one of six age brackets.

Table 2 Questionnaire responses by age

Q – Your age?				
	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54
Total	4	18	9	22
Percentage	4%	18%	9%	22%
	55-64	65+	Prefer not to say	No answer provided
Total	23	22	3	4
Percentage	23%	22%	3%	-
<i>Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.</i>				

Two-thirds (67%) of the returned questionnaires which had answered the question, had been completed by people aged 45 or older.

3.5 DISABILITIES

People were asked if they considered themselves to have a disability.

Table 3 Questionnaire responses breakdown of disability consideration

	Q - Do you consider yourself to have a disability?			
	Yes	No	Prefer not to say	No answer provided
Total	12	86	2	5
Percentage	12%	86%	2%	-

12% of returned questionnaires which had answered the question had been completed by people who did declare a disability.

3.6 ATTENDANCE AT THE EVENT

In addition to the socio-demographic questions, people were asked to indicate if they have attended a consultation event. If the respondent had been to any of the events, they were asked to indicate which one(s).

Table 4 Questionnaire responses regarding attending consultation event

	Q - Did you attend a consultation event		
	Yes	No	No answer provided
Total	21	78	5
Percentage	21%	79%	-

Of the 21 respondents who indicated they had attended a consultation event:

- Five people identified the St Mathews event;
- 12 people identified one of the Hillside Beeston events;
- Four people did not state the venue.

There were also five respondents who wrote in the free text column that they were not aware of any consultation events.

3.7 LESSONS LEARNT

The population mix identified from the returned questionnaires highlights:

- The consultation motivated more men than women to respond to complete surveys. This may have been down to a number of reasons, e.g. style of consultation materials, men responding ‘on behalf of the household’, but represented the views of their family or more men using the motorway and local road network;
- The age profile of the respondents shows the consultation material struggled to engage with the youth population. There may be lessons which Highways England can learn in terms of the channels of engagement to increase this in the future;
- As only 21% of people returning a questionnaire had also been to an event, this suggests that the brochure provided sufficient information for many people to comment on the proposed scheme without also feeling the need to attend an event;
- Those respondents that did not attend an event (79%) were not given an opportunity to state the reasons why. In future, Highways England could capture this information and use it as an opportunity to understand what makes a convenient event for stakeholders and members of the public to attend;

- Although the consultation events were promoted through a range of mediums, the turnout to the events were low. Highways England could look to understand the reasons behind this and identify the most efficient and effective way to encourage attendance.

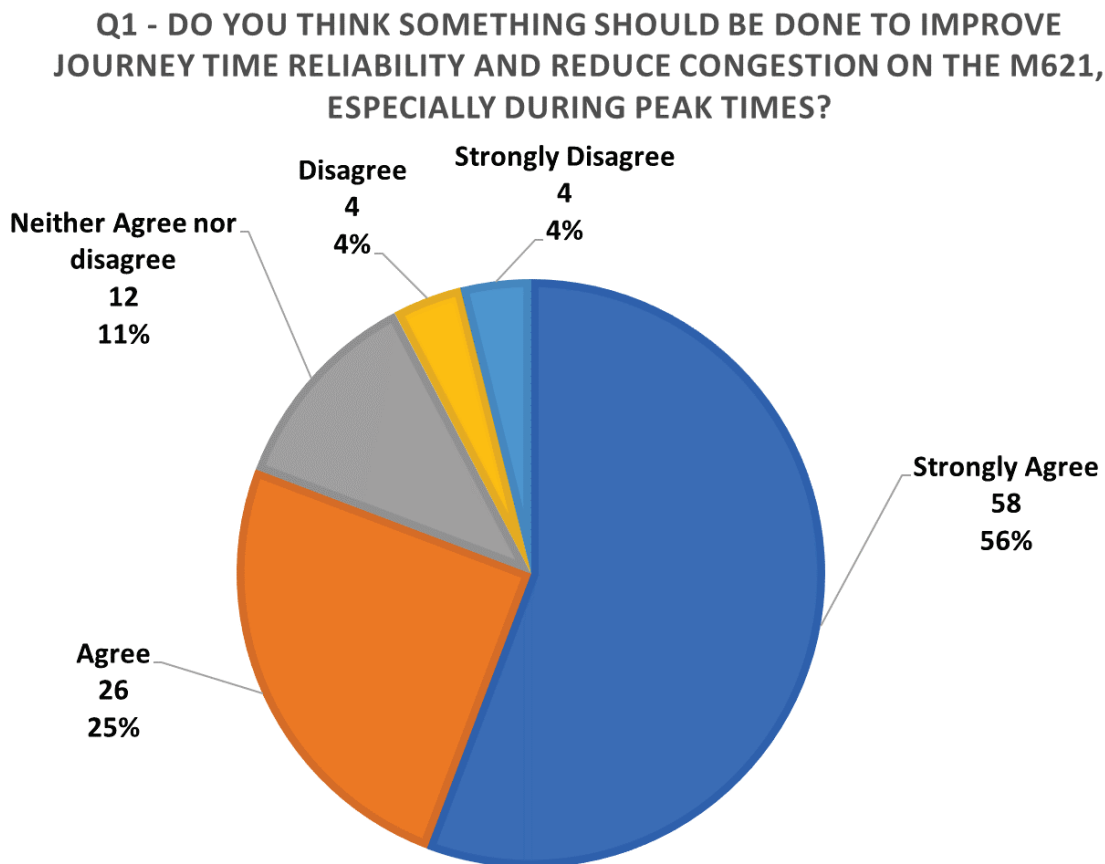
Highways England will examine the responses further and determine how this data can be used to inform the preparation and development of consultation materials for the statutory consultation phase.

4 M621 SCHEME SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

4.1 THE NEED FOR A SCHEME

Question 1 of the questionnaire asked respondents about their belief that “something should be done to improve reliability and reduce congestion on the M621”.

The responses are presented in [Figure 2](#).



104 responses to this question. One questionnaire contained no response.

Figure 2 Opinion on congestion and journey time reliability on the M621

The responses show that the majority of people who responded to this question (81%) agree with this statement to some extent, with only 8% disagreeing that improvements are required.

[Table 5](#) shows the breakdown of these responses, by their postcode location.

Table 5 Opinion on journey time and congestion by area, breakdown by responder location - breakdown

Area		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Local (study area)	Total	20	15	7	1	2
	Percentage	44%	33%	16%	2%	4%
Wider	Total	23	7	5	2	0
	Percentage	62%	19%	14%	5%	0%
Unknown	Total	15	4	0	1	2
	Percentage	68%	18%	0%	5%	9%
Total	Total	58	26	12	4	4
	Percentage	56%	25%	12%	4%	4%
<p>104 responses to this question. One questionnaire contained no response. Some rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.</p>						

The results demonstrate that both local and wider residents believe there are traffic problems to be addressed.

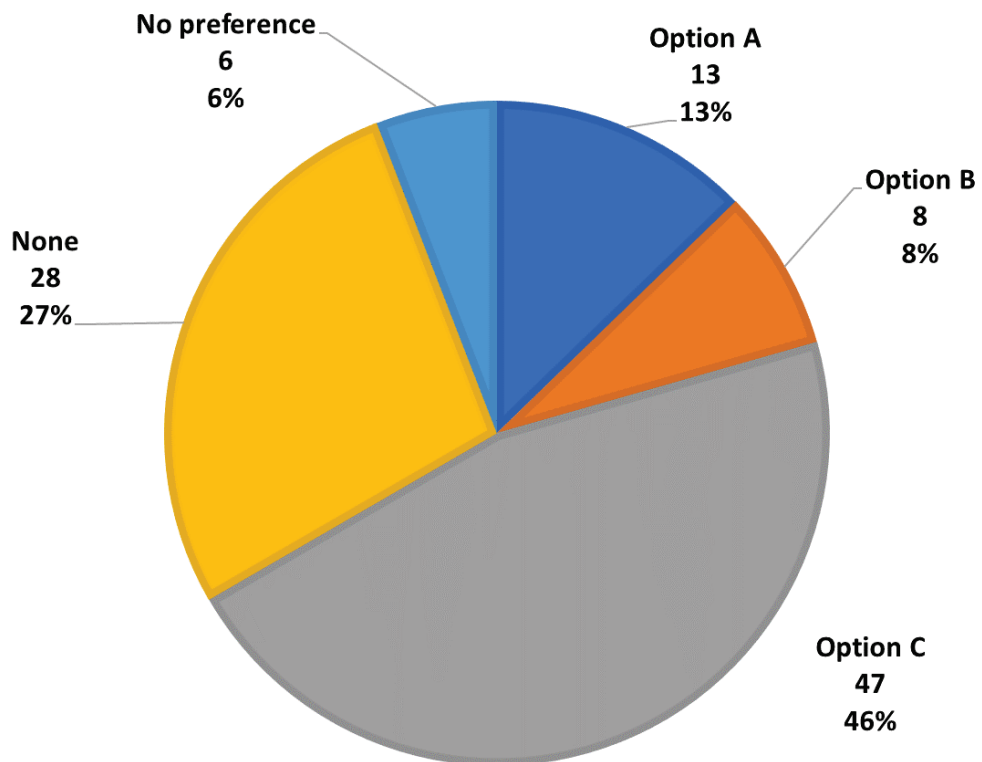
The 83 questionnaire responses which also provided a valid postcode have been mapped, and responses to this question are presented in Appendix A5.

4.2 PREFERRED SCHEME OPTION

Question 2 of the questionnaire asked for people to identify which option they preferred, having reviewed the three proposed options.

The responses are presented in **Figure 3**.

Q2 - AFTER REVIEWING THE PROPOSED OPTIONS (OPTIONS A, B AND C), WHICH OPTION DO YOU PREFER?



102 responses to this question. Three questionnaires contained no response.

Figure 3 Preferred scheme option

The responses show that the most popular response was for Option C, indicated by 46% of people. The next most common response was for the development of none of the proposed options (27%).

Table 6 shows the breakdown of these responses, by their stated postcode location.

Table 6 Preferred scheme option - breakdown

Area		Option A	Option B	Option C	None	No preference
Local (study area)	Total	10	3	16	11	4
	Percentage	23%	7%	36%	25%	9%
Wider	Total	1	2	19	13	1
	Percentage	3%	6%	53%	36%	3%
Unknown	Total	2	3	12	4	1
	Percentage	9%	14%	55%	18%	5%
Total	Total	13	8	47	28	6
	Percentage	13%	8%	46%	27%	6%

**102 responses to this question. Three questionnaires contained no response.
Some rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.**

The 83 responses which also provided a valid postcode were mapped, and responses to this question are presented within Appendix A5.

Respondents from all geographical groups demonstrate a preference for Option C.

The graphics demonstrates the mix of support, including some support for Option C from residents of the Beeston area.

When answering the question about their preferred scheme option, respondents were also able to provide an open text comment to give more details about why they have selected their preferred option. A summary of the most common themes is presented in **Table 7**.

Table 7 Preferred scheme option – open text comments

	Total
Further support for Option C	30
Suggestions of alternative options / Comments that proposed options will not solve all issues	25
Comments related to the adverse impacts on local network	12
Comments that junction2a westbound (anti-clockwise) should be retained	10

	Total
Concern about removing hard shoulder from the M621	6
Comments that more NMU facilities are needed to reduce severance	6
Further support for Option A	4
Concern about the impact of roadworks	4
Further support for Option B	3
Concern about the impact of proposals on local air quality and noise	3
Concern about the negative safety implications of Option C	2
Queries on how buses would be impacted by the proposals	2

As highlighted, many of the open text comments included suggestions of alternative options, or details which the scheme is failing to consider. These include:

- Speed limit reduction to 40mph on the M621/Speed limit restrictions;
- Introduction of a highway bridge to merge into the slow lane at junction 3 westbound;
- Central reservation barrier between lanes 2 and 3 at junction 3 westbound to enable the junction 2a to remain open;
- No reduction of the junction 3 westbound slip road from two lanes to one;
- Junction 2 should include free-flowing connections for westbound traffic;
- The scheme options have no direct connection from the M621 to the M1 northbound;
- Concerns about safe running lane widths when adding third lane between junctions 1 and 3.
- Concerns about the loss of a hard shoulder as a part of the scheme;
- The scheme should be addressing issues on the Leeds Inner Ring Road – there are not the same levels of problems on the M621;
- Comment that the scheme options will lead to greater congestion on the A643;
- The scheme should also include measures to address congestion at the Meadow Road / Jack Lane local road network junction;
- The problems should be considered more holistically, with investment in other areas rather than motorway, e.g. park and ride, cycle routes, public transport.

With regards to concerns about the impacts of local air quality and noise, the scheme development will be subject to ongoing environmental assessment work which will take account of potential impacts and design any mitigation to tackle adverse impacts.

With regards to NMU facilities, pedestrians and cyclists are very important to Highways England. The integration of provisions such as crossings and footways is considered at all stages of the design process on all Highways England schemes, and will be a key

element of the designs for this M621 Junctions 1 to 7 Improvement Scheme, as the detailed design proceeds.

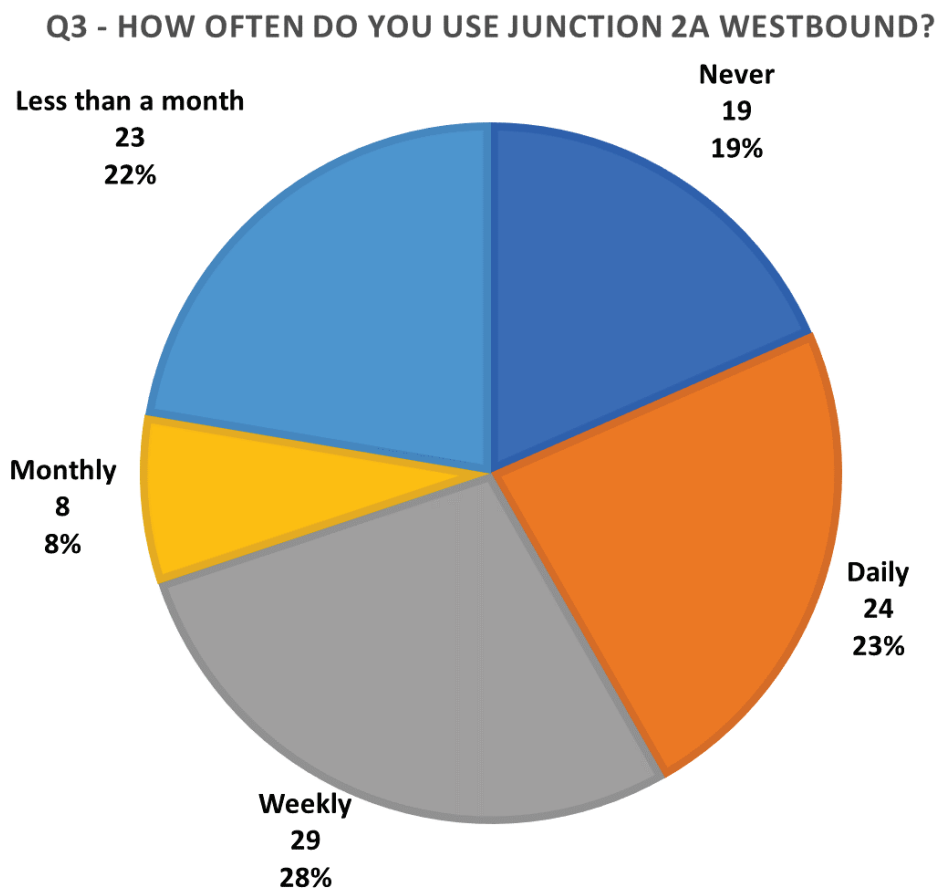
All alternative options will feed into a wider analysis to help develop the design and aid in selecting a preferred option. All concerns that have been raised will be looked into and considered further where appropriate.

4.3 JUNCTION 2A WESTBOUND

All three scheme options include the closure of M621 junction 2a westbound. Questions three to five of the questionnaire asked a series of questions about this part of the network.

Firstly, respondents were asked to indicate how often they currently use junction 2a westbound.

The responses are presented in [Figure 4](#).



103 responses to this question. Two questionnaires contained no response.

Figure 4 Use of M621 junction 2a westbound

The responses show that over half of the respondents who answered this question use the slip road at least once a week (51%), with almost one quarter (23%) using it daily. One fifth (19%) of questionnaires came from people who never use the junction 2a westbound slip road.

Table 8 shows the breakdown of these responses, by their stated postcode location.

Table 8 Use of M621 junction 2a westbound - breakdown

Area		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less than a month	Never
Local (study area)	Total	17	15	4	3	5
	Percentage	38%	33%	9%	7%	11%
Wider	Total	4	12	4	13	4
	Percentage	11%	32%	11%	34%	11%
Unknown	Total	3	2	0	7	10
	Percentage	14%	9%	0%	32%	45%
Total	Total	24	29	8	23	19
	Percentage	23%	28%	8%	22%	19%

**103 responses to this question. Two questionnaires contained no response.
Some rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.**

The breakdown shows that the local population are most likely to use junction 2a westbound, with almost three quarters (71%) of residents who responded using the junction at least weekly, and 38% using it daily.

Whilst it is used less frequently by people who live across the wider area, there are still 11% of these respondents using it daily, and 43% using it at least once a week.

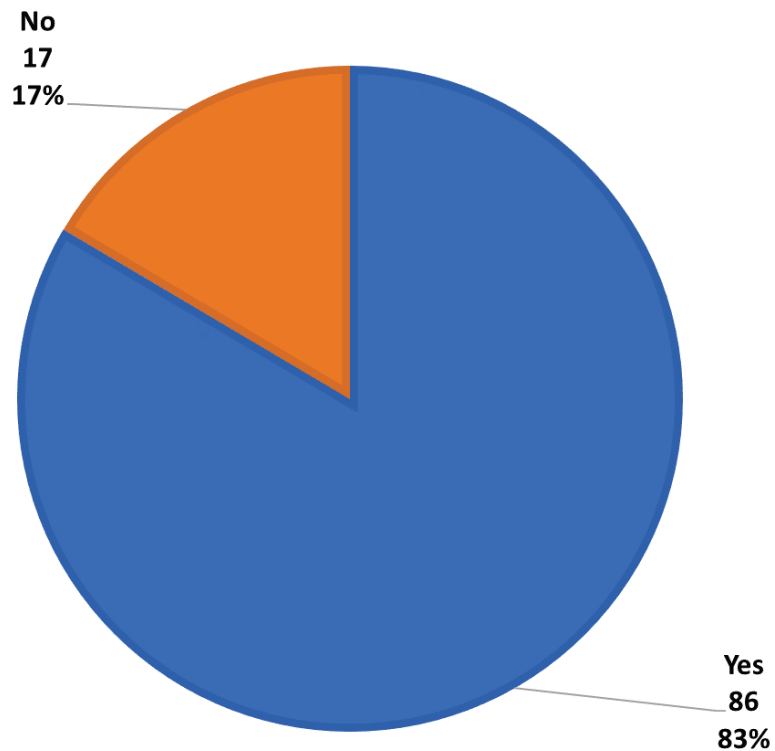
This information demonstrates that there will be a need for alternative routes to be clearly signposted, should junction 2a westbound be closed, so that local journeys can continue to be made effectively.

The 83 questionnaires which also provided a valid postcode have been mapped, and responses to this question are presented in Appendix A5.

The consultation material outlines the case for closing junction 2a. The questionnaire then asked, “do you understand the reasons for proposing to close junction 2a westbound?”

The responses are presented in **Figure 5**.

**Q4 - DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE REASONS FOR PROPOSING TO CLOSE
JUNCTION 2A WESTBOUND?**



103 responses to this question. Two questionnaires contained no response.

Figure 5 Understanding the reasons for proposing the closure of M621 junction 2a westbound

The responses show that the majority of people (83%) did understand the reasons for the proposal.

Table 9 shows the breakdown of these responses, by their stated postcode location.

Table 9 Understanding the reasons for proposing the closure of M621 junction 2a westbound - breakdown

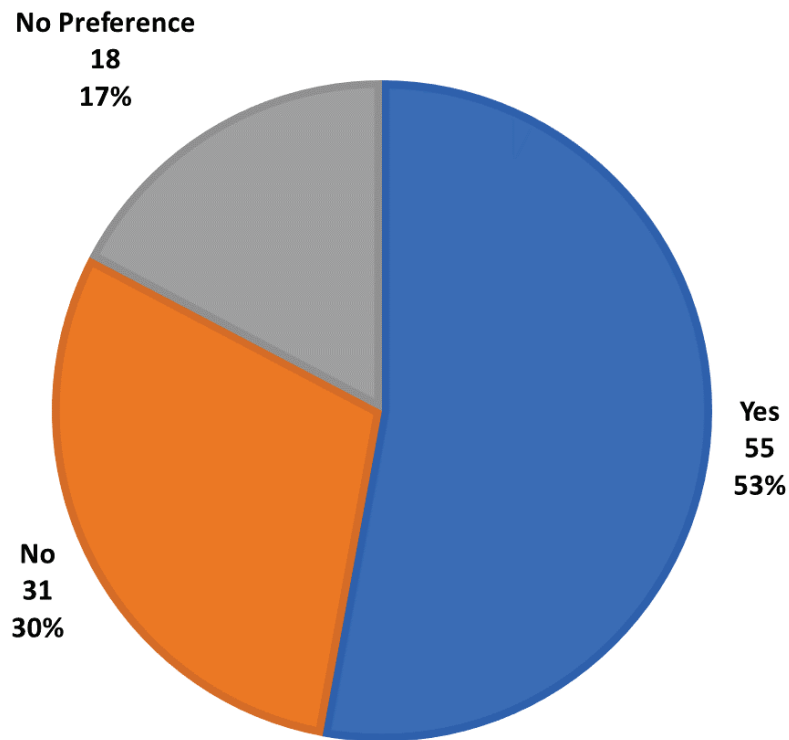
Area		Yes	No
Local (study area)	Total	34	10
	Percentage	77%	23%
Wider	Total	31	6
	Percentage	84%	16%
Unknown	Total	21	1
	Percentage	95%	5%
Total	Total	86	17
	Percentage	83%	17%
<p>103 responses to this question. Two questionnaires contained no response. Some rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.</p>			

The breakdown shows that amongst the local population, there is slightly less understanding of the reasons for the proposal to close junction 2a westbound. Across the wider population, 84% of respondents understood the reasons whilst across the local population this is only 77%. Further information will be provided on the need for the closure and diversion requirements during the statutory consultation, particularly targeted at local residents.

The questionnaire then asked the respondent, “do you support the proposed closure of junction 2a westbound?”. This was explicitly asking about support for the proposed closure which is present in all three options.

The responses are presented in [Figure 6](#).

Q5 - DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF JUNCTION 2A WESTBOUND?



104 responses to this question. One questionnaire contained no response.

Figure 6 Support for the closure of M621 junction 2a westbound

The responses show that a slim majority (53%) of respondents did support the proposed closure of junction 2a westbound, 30% of responses were unsupportive and 17% stated that they had no preference towards the closure.

Table 10 shows the breakdown of these responses, by their stated postcode location.

Table 10 Do you support the closure of M621 junction 2a westbound - breakdown

Area		Yes	No	No Preference
Local (study area)	Total	24	14	7
	Percentage	53%	31%	16%
Wider	Total	18	12	7
	Percentage	49%	32%	19%
Unknown	Total	13	5	4
	Percentage	59%	23%	18%
Total	Total	55	31	18
	Percentage	53%	30%	17%

104 responses to this question. One questionnaire contained no response. Some rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The breakdown shows a similar profile, regardless of where the respondent lives. Typically, around half of people do support the closure, with around one third being against the closure and the remainder not having a preference.

When answering this question, respondents were also able to provide an open text comment to give more details about why they selected their preferred option. A summary of the most common themes is presented in [Table 11](#).

Table 11 Do you support the closure of M621 junction 2a westbound – breakdown – open text comments

	Total
Closure would have a negative impact on congestion across the local road network	19
Junction 2a is convenient for local access	18
Layout around junction 2a is currently dangerous	17
Closure would be positive for safety	7

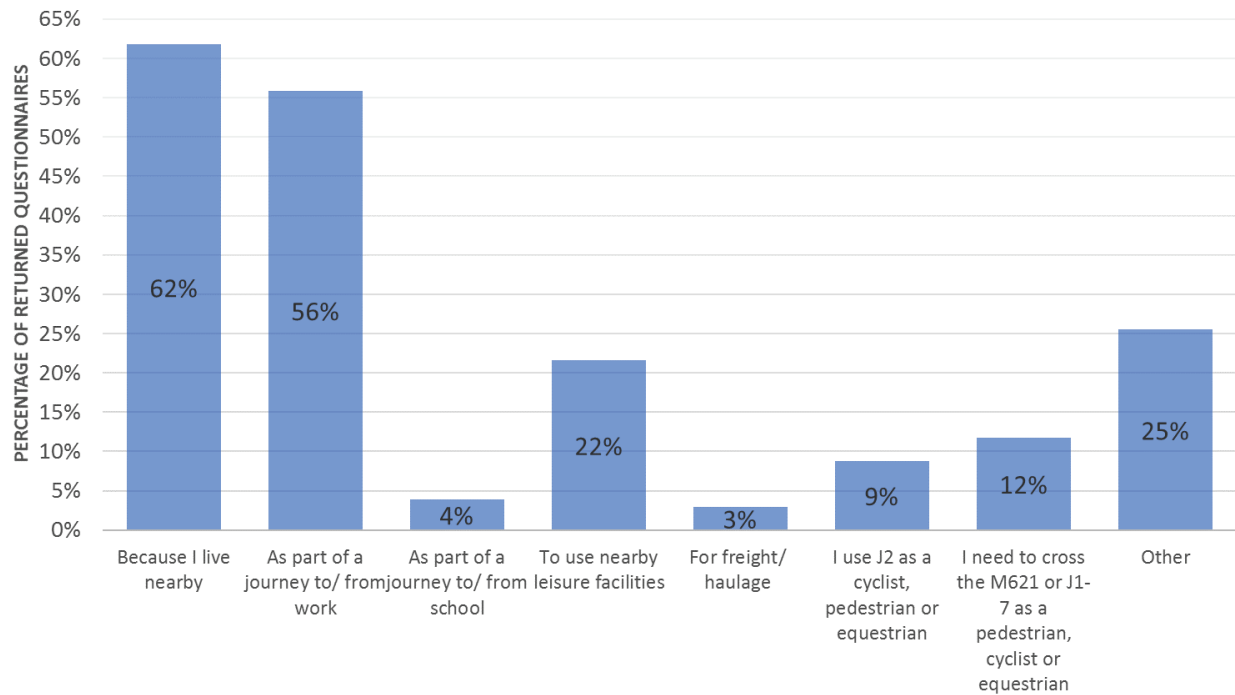
	Total
Closure would be positive for congestion	6
Alternative option suggested	3
Queries about the implications for local bus services	3
Comments that closure would restrict emergency service vehicle access	2
Comments that proposals would be bad for safety	2
Comments that proposals would have negative air quality and noise impacts	2
Junction is inconvenient or under-used at present. No issues with closing it.	2
Need to include pedestrian facilities in all design work	1
Doesn't see the need to close the junction	1

4.4 REASONS FOR USING THE M621

Question six of the questionnaire asked for respondents to identify the reasons why they use the M621 and/or junctions 1 to 7. They were provided with a series of potential options to choose, as well as having the choice to write their own open text reasons. Unlike the other questions, multiple options could be chosen.

The responses are presented in [Figure 7](#).

Q6 - WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU USE THE M621 AND / OR JUNCTIONS 1 TO 7 FOR? TICK ALL THAT APPLY



102 responses to this question. Three questionnaires contained no response.

The percentages reflect the proportion of returned questionnaires which selected each option.

Figure 7 Reasons for using M621 and/or junctions 1-7

The responses show that the most popular reasons for using the M621 and/or its junctions were that the respondents live nearby (62%), or they use it as a part of a journey to work (56%). Over one in ten (12%) of respondents cross the M621 at junctions 1 to junction 7 as a pedestrian, cyclist or equestrian demonstrating the need for NMU facilities along the scheme, particularly at junction 2 where 9% indicated that they cross here.

Table 12 shows the breakdown of these responses, by their stated postcode location.

Table 12 Reasons for using M621 and/or junctions 1-7 - breakdown

Area		Because I live nearby	As part of a journey to/from work	As part of a journey to/from school	To use nearby leisure facilities
Local (study area)	Total	36	24	3	6
	Percentage	80%	53%	7%	13%
Wider	Total	21	19	0	9
	Percentage	55%	50%	0%	24%
Unknown	Total	6	14	1	7
	Percentage	27%	64%	5%	32%
Total	Total	63	57	4	22
	Percentage	62%	56%	4%	22%
		For freight/haulage	I use junction 2 as a cyclist, pedestrian or equestrian	I need to cross the M621 or junction 1-7 as a pedestrian, cyclist or equestrian	Other
Local (study area)	Total	0	5	4	12
	Percentage	0%	11%	9%	27%
Wider	Total	3	3	6	10
	Percentage	8%	8%	16%	26%
Unknown	Total	0	1	2	4
	Percentage	0%	5%	9%	18%
Total	Total	3	9	12	26
	Percentage	3%	9%	12%	25%

102 respondents answered this question. Three questionnaires contained no response.

Some rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

More than half of people identified that they use the M621 as a part of a journey to work. It is likely that many of these journeys would be made during the traditional peak periods, which is when the worst congestion issues have been identified. The proposed options have each been developed to improve the performance of the network during the weekday morning and evening peak periods, which should offer improved conditions for people making journeys to and from work.

It is noted that a considerable proportion of the people responding to the question identified that this section of the Motorway serves as an important role in providing access to leisure. It will be important that any final design takes due consideration of this, and provides adequate access to these facilities.

The importance of being able to cross the M621 as a pedestrian or cyclist is also clear. As outlined previously, the development of any scheme in greater detail will include the full integration of pedestrian and cyclist facilities wherever feasible, to ensure severance impacts created by the highway are minimised.

When answering this question, respondents who chose 'other', were encouraged to provide further details. The reasons provided are summarised in [Table 13](#).

Table 13 **Reasons for using M621 and/or junctions 1-7 – open text comments**

	Total
Journeys arriving towards Leeds from the west / access to Leeds City Centre	10
Travel to see family	4
Onward access to the M62 or M1	3
Motorway route is safer and quicker than alternatives	2
Travel to hospital	1
Travel as a part of the working day	1

5 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

5.1 QUESTIONNAIRE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

At the end of the questionnaire, there was an opportunity to provide any additional comments in relation to the scheme proposals. A relatively high number (39 of the 105) returned questionnaires including additional comments.

The content of the open text responses has been analysed and grouped. The main themes of these comments are summarised in [Table 14](#). Although 39 responses included text in the additional comments section, there were a number of respondents who commented on multiple themes.

Table 14 Summary of all additional questionnaire comments

	Total
Comments related to negative impacts on the local road network and the need for local measures	12
Alternative scheme proposed	11
Proposals simply accommodate increasing demand for cars. Does not address wider car demand issue	4
Concerns about local air quality and/or noise impacts	4
Need better walking and cycling facilities included within the proposals	3
Comments that key stakeholders should continue to be involved through the scheme development process	2
Concern about the impacts of roadworks	2
Need for more significant measures at junction 7	2
Questioning the impact of the proposals for emergency service vehicle access	1
Comment criticising the consultation	1
Need for better connections from the M621 to the Park & Ride	1
Consider other uses of money, such as better maintenance of existing infrastructure	1
Need roadside facilities for haulage industry	1

Comments relating to the impact on the local road network primarily refer to impacts around Elland Road, Wesley Road, and Armley Roundabout.

5.2 OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

As well as responses provided via the consultation questionnaire, additional correspondence was received by Highways England during the consultation period as letters or emails. These responses are reported separately from those received on the questionnaire as they were not answering the specific questions provided.

All additional correspondence, along with questionnaire responses, will feed into a wider analysis to help develop the design and aid in selecting a preferred option. All concerns that have been raised will be investigated and mitigated, as appropriate.

Records of this correspondence are provided below:

Leeds City Council

Leeds City Council responded highlighting the interactions between the highway scheme area and the local road network. The letter summarises that “Leeds City Council fully supports the principle of Highways England’s proposed scheme to improve the M621 between junctions 1 and 7. Leeds City Council supports a hybrid of Highways England’s Option B and C proposals and it is our desire to work with Highways England to deliver the improvements outlined and trust that Leeds City Council will be consulted at each stage, to ensure the impact on the local road network is understood, minimised and mitigated.” Highways England are working closely with Leeds City Council to ensure that the proposed improvements align with their wider transport strategy for the city centre. This will continue as the design further develops in the future.

Historic England

A representation from Historic England provided comments that the information received had been considered, and on this occasion, there were no further comments to be made.

Caddick Developments

Fore Consulting Limited (Fore) provided a response on behalf of Caddick Developments Limited who highlighted their support for the changes proposed to the M621. It was noted that they had a particular interest in the close proximity between the eastbound (clockwise) on slip at junction 2a and the eastbound off slip at junction 3 which can create difficulty for traffic flow during peak periods. Highways England are currently undertaking further traffic assessment to understand the potential impacts across the M621 and wider networks which will identify what, if any, mitigations are needed to improve traffic flow in these areas.

Asda Stores Limited

Sanderson Associates contacted Highways England on behalf of Asda Stores Limited and requested a meeting be organised to discuss the scheme and its potential impact on the M621 corridor. A subsequent meeting was arranged on the 05 October 2017. Refer to section 2.6.

High Speed 2 Limited (HS2)

High Speed 2 Limited (HS2) responded to the consultation material highlighting the interactions between the highway scheme area, and the proposed HS2 alignment.

The letter stated that “part of the proposed M621 improvement works at junction 4 (slip road) are partially located within the limits of land subject to formal Safeguarding Directions (see attached safeguarding plan). As a consequence, the land in question is potentially required for the construction and/or operation of the railway.”

It was also noted that “following assessment by colleagues, HS2 does not consider there to be any significant risk or potential scheme conflict between your scheme and the HS2 proposal in the vicinity.” The letter went on to identify the potential risk of overlaps in construction should the highway scheme be delayed and HS2 begin construction early, and suggested means of working together to ensure consistent traffic assessments are undertaken for the rail and highway schemes.

Environment Agency (EA)

The Environment Agency consulted Highways England but no detailed comments were provided on the highway options presented. The letter did however, reference work being undertaken to refresh the Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy. The EA indicated that this document should be considered in the design of a preferred scheme.

Yorkshire County Cricket Club

A Yorkshire County Cricket Club representative contacted Highways England to highlight concerns primarily with the impact works might have on its match days. The correspondence stated “the best solution for us at this moment in time is as and when works and timings have become more specific, we can forward our fixture list to notify you of. We are also happy to retweet about the works when they begin if this is going to have an impact on the people attending cricket for all matches at Headingley Cricket Ground.” Highways England will work closely with all stakeholders to ensure minimum disruption during the construction period.

Ramblers Association

A representation from the Leeds Group provided detailed comments on the proposals for junctions 2, 3 and 4. Comments related to the maintenance of Public Rights of Way (PROW) as well as highlighting opportunities to provide better NMU facilities at these junctions.

Members of the public

A summary of the content of other letters and emails received from members of the public are provided below:

- Comments proposing alternative scheme options (refer to section 4.2 for the alternative suggestions);
- Comments regarding the need for improved pedestrian facilities and public rights of way to be thoroughly considered as a part of the detailed design stage;
- Comments suggesting the closure of junction 2a eastbound (clockwise) in addition to junction 2a westbound (anti-clockwise);
- Comments related to the departures from design standards required for option C;
- Comments related to the advertisement of the consultation events; and
- Comments about the impact closing junction 2a westbound may have on other local routes, and potential complementary measures to address safety and congestion issues on the local road network.

The public, with their knowledge of the local area, can often contribute ideas that have not been considered by the project team. All comments provided will be taken forward and considered to help develop the design as the scheme progresses.

Beeston Community Forum

A letter was submitted by the Beeston Community Forum. The letter raises concerns surrounding the closure of junction 2a and its impact on Wesley Street. The correspondence states “We accept that the scheme will bring improvements for commuters who do not live in Leeds, but we also believe that this will be to the detriment of local residents. As the proposals involve the closure of Junction 2a, it will be impossible for motorists to access Holbeck or Beeston Hill from the motorway. This traffic will inevitably be compelled to take an alternative route, and we believe that this will lead to additional traffic along Dewsbury Road (parts of which are congested at rush hour), and Wesley Street.” Highways England have since attended a Beeston Community Forum (details in section 2.5) to answer any questions which were raised within the letter and will continue to inform the Forum and wider general public of any new information as and when it is available.

Highways England have provided a direct response to all letters and emails received during the consultation period, and have considered the points raised by all correspondence in addition to the questionnaire responses. A summary of the public’s concerns raised by letters and email and Highways England’s response has been provided in Appendix A6.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 GENERAL

A thorough consultation was held on the proposed improvements to the M621 with key stakeholders being invited to provide any feedback. The consultation was advertised through a range of mediums including regional media coverage and the distribution of over 7,800 brochures to local residents and businesses. Despite this, a relatively low number (124) of responses were received comprising of 105 returned questionnaires and 18 comments received by letter or email.

The consultation results, from the questionnaires, show that there is strong acknowledgement that there are currently issues on the M621, with 81% of people agreeing to some extent that something should be done.

However, agreement on what should be done to address the issues is mixed. Almost one half (46%) supported Option C, 13% supported Option A, and 8% supported Option B. Over one quarter (27%) of consultation responses rejected all three options presented. A further 6% of respondents identified no preference.

The responses show that 54% of people did support the proposed closure of junction 2a westbound, with 30% of those responses unsupportive. A further 17% stated that they had no preference in the closure.

The primary concerns raised with the proposals were people opposing the closure of junction 2a westbound (anticlockwise) as it provides convenient access to the local area. There were concerns about the impact that re-routed traffic will have on parts of the local road network and its implications on safety. There were also comments raised about the adverse impacts of roadworks, and the need to ensure that pedestrian and cyclist facilities are fully integrated into the next phase of the design process.

The feedback collected on the consultation, and the consultation events, will be used in the planning of future Highways England consultations, including the statutory consultation which will be undertaken in the future as a part of the ongoing development of a scheme for M621 junctions 1-7.

6.2 NEXT STEPS

The feedback received from the consultation will be one element used to inform the selection process for the preferred option alongside additional economic and environmental assessment work.

Further assessment will be undertaken to understand the effects of the proposed closure of junction 2a on the local roads. This will include more detailed modelling which looks at changes in traffic behaviour as a result of the closure. Once this has been done, we will then be able to consider, what, if any, mitigations we may need to implement.

All proposed alternative options, referenced in section 4.2, will be considered to help develop the design where appropriate.

Pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian counts have been undertaken around junction 2 and 7 following the consultation period, to facilitate a better understanding of the current usage of NMU crossing points. Following further analysis, we will consider the potential for any improvements which could be made to existing NMU facilities.

With regards to concerns about the impacts of local air quality and noise, the scheme development will be subject to ongoing environmental assessment work which will take account of potential impacts and design any mitigation to tackle adverse changes.

We expect to announce our preferred option, known as Preferred Route Announcement, in spring 2018. Once our preferred route has been announced we will begin developing our preliminary design, which will include carrying out further surveys.

We will then publish our proposals under the Highways Act 1980, this is known as publishing our draft orders. This is the start of the statutory planning process and another public consultation will be held after our draft orders are published.

Subject to successfully completing all of the necessary statutory processes and the scheme remaining value for money, it is expected that construction work will start in 2020. As the scheme is in its early stages of design, the construction plan is still under development however, it is expected that construction will be completed by 2022.

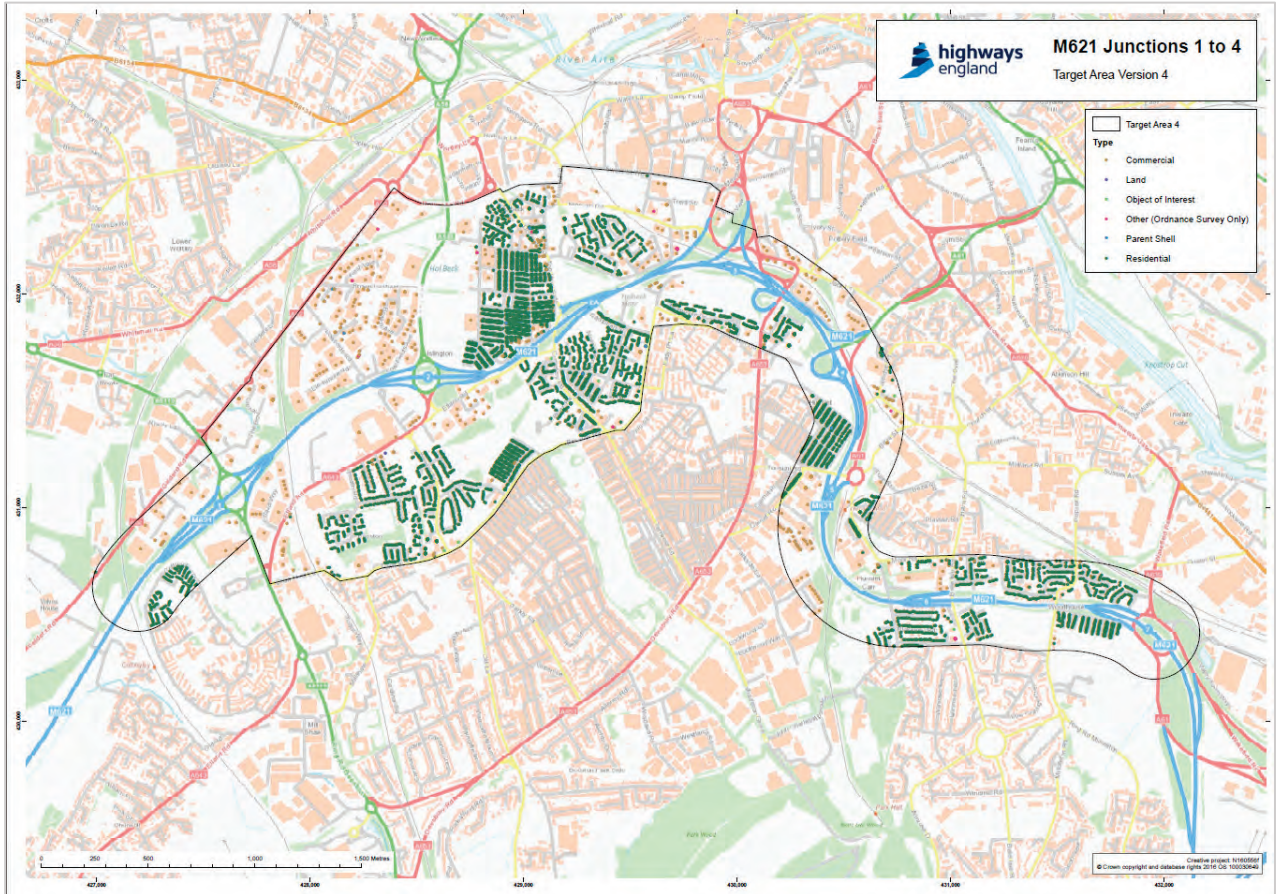
6.3 FURTHER STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with all stakeholders will continue, as appropriate, throughout the development of the scheme. A statutory consultation will be undertaken once we have published our Draft Orders under the Highways Act 1980. This is expected to be in winter 2018 and will be publicised closer to the time.

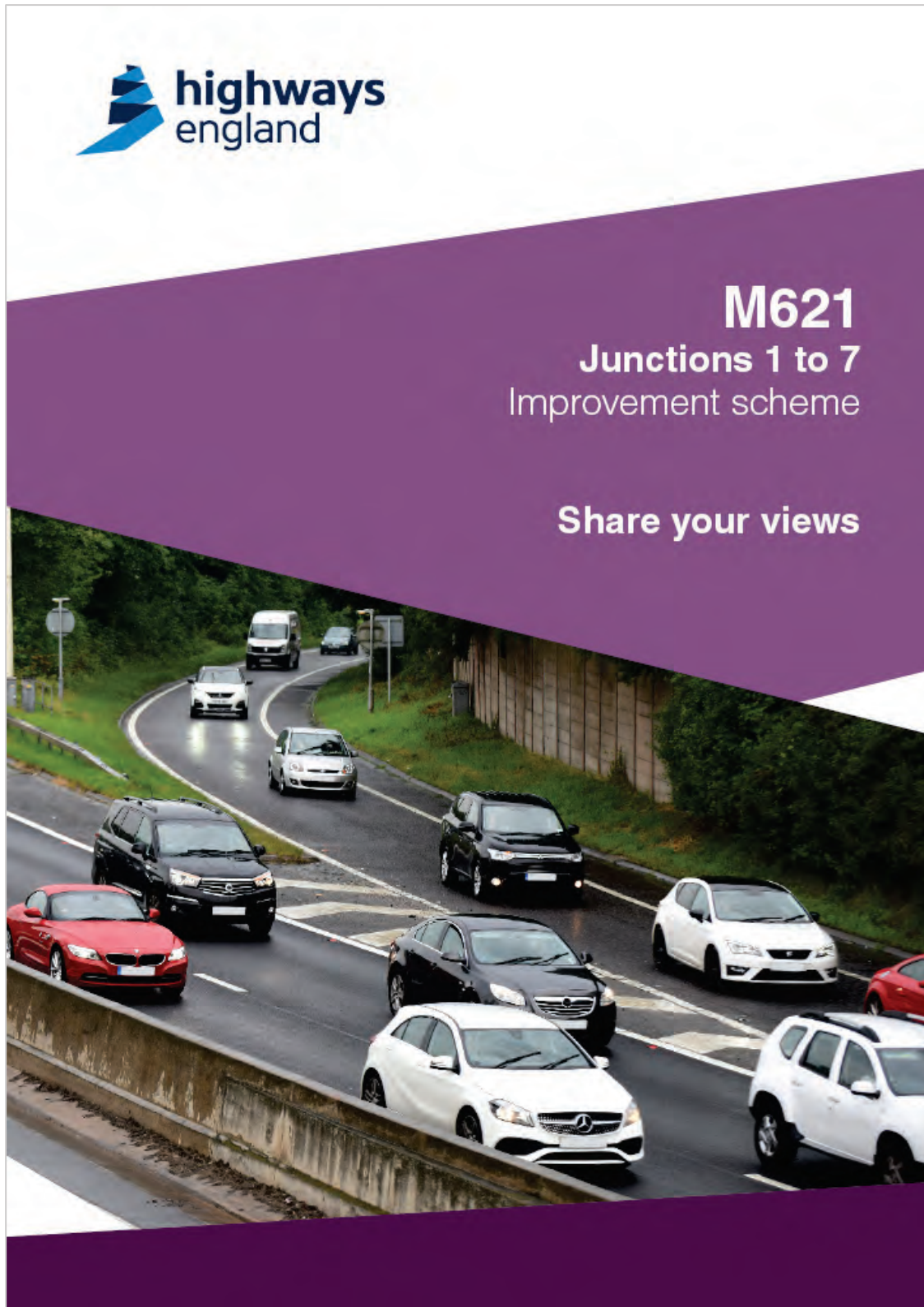
We recognise the importance of ensuring the scheme proposals are supported by local communities and will work with stakeholders to develop the designs further and communicate any changes to the scheme proposals.


Appendices

A1 – CONSULTATION BROCHURE DISTRIBUTION AREA



A2 – PUBLIC CONSULTATION BROCHURE






M621
Junctions 1 to 7
Improvement scheme

Share your views

A3 – PUBLIC CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE



M621
Junctions 1–7 Improvement Scheme
Public consultation questionnaire

We'd like to hear your views on our proposed improvement options. You can also complete this questionnaire online at www.highways.gov.uk/m621j1-7.

Please return your completed questionnaire to us by 15 October 2017.

The return address and postage is already provided so, when you have completed this form please separate from the booklet and follow the instructions on the rear.

All comments made during the consultation process will be made public, but personal details such as addresses will not.

Please provide us with your name, address and email address. If you'd prefer for your comments to be anonymous, please just provide your postcode.

Name

Address

Postcode

Email

1. Do you think something should be done to improve journey time reliability and reduce congestion on the M621, especially during peak times?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree
Strongly disagree

2. After reviewing the proposed options (Options A, B and C), which option do you prefer?

Option A Option B Option C None of them No preference

Please provide more detail as to why you have selected this option. For example: What do you like? What don't you like? What could we improve?

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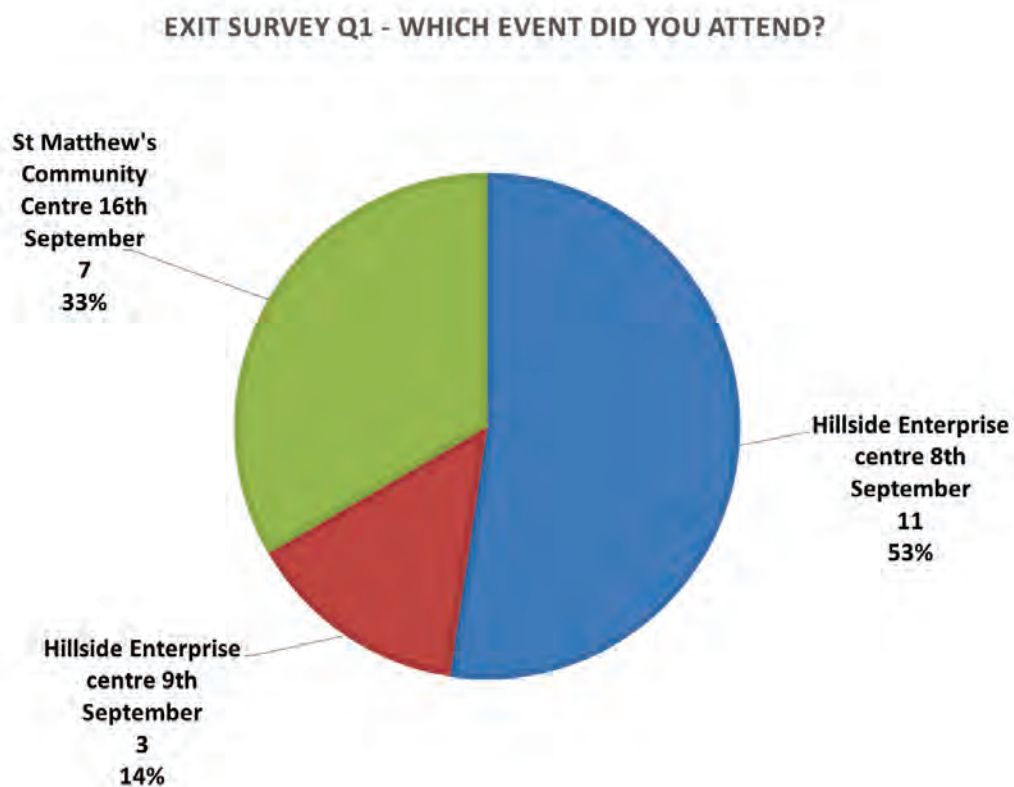
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A4 - EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONSULTATION EVENTS – EXIT SURVEYS

Attendees to the public consultation events were asked to complete a survey to gauge the effectiveness of the events. Of the 33 attendees, 21 people completed an exit survey. The questionnaire included five questions related to the M621 junctions 1 – 7 consultation events.

Exit Survey Question 1 asked the respondents which of the three events they attended. The responses are presented in **Figure 8**.



21 responses to this question. Nobody did not complete.

Figure 8 Public consultation event attendance

As highlighted in the main report, attendance at the three consultation events was as follows:

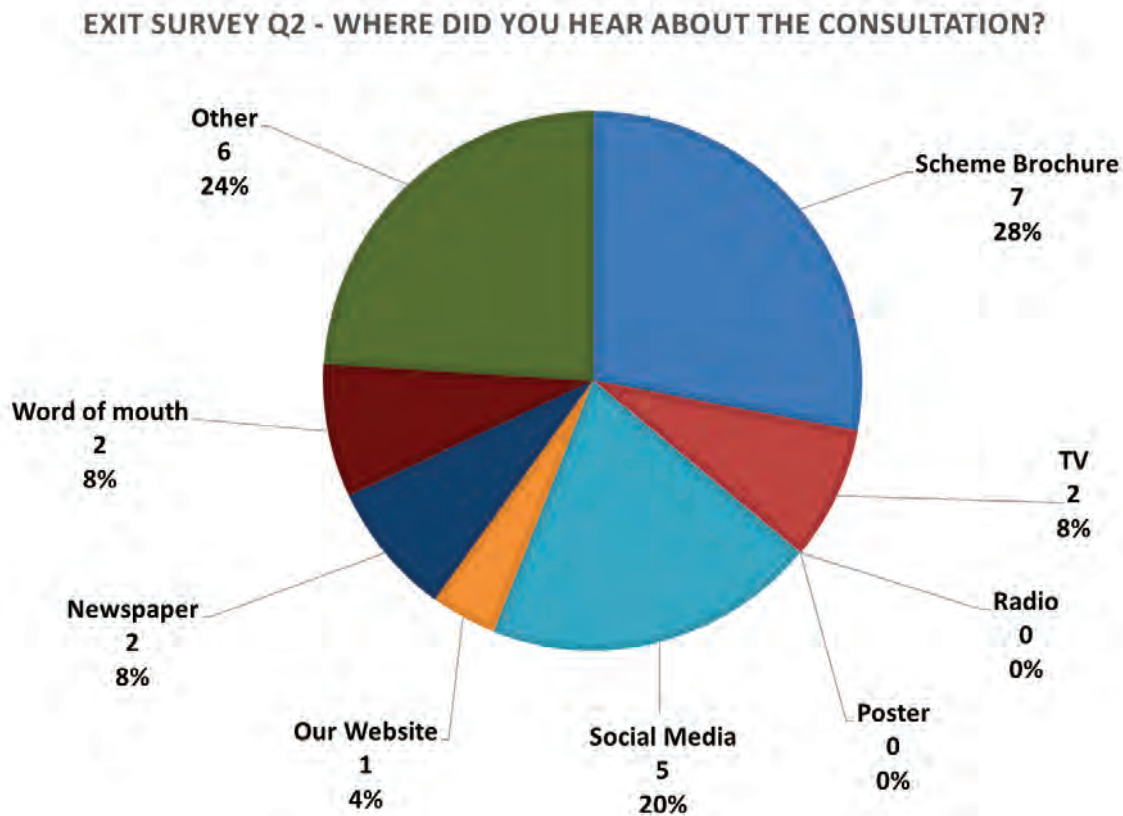
- Hillside Enterprise Centre – Friday 08 September 2017 – 16 people
- Hillside Enterprise Centre – Saturday 09 September 2017 – seven people
- St Matthew's Community Centre – Saturday 16 September – 10 people

Figure 2 demonstrates that most returned exit surveys came from the event at Hillside Enterprise Centre on Friday 08 September (53%), followed by St Matthews's Community

Centre on the 16 September. The fewest completed surveys came from the Hillside Enterprise Centre event on the 09 September.

Exit Survey Question 2 asked respondents “where did you hear about the consultation”, with some respondents choosing multiple options.

The responses are presented in **Figure 9**.



21 responses to this question. Nobody did not complete.

Figure 9 Understanding the effectiveness of media outlets used

The responses show that the scheme brochure was the most effective method of communication (28%). The least popular choices were radio and poster with none of the respondents choosing these.

Almost a quarter (24%) of surveys identified an ‘other’ means of engagement. The comments provided indicated these: Internet, local councillor, South Leeds News, Leeds City Council, work email and business news alerts.

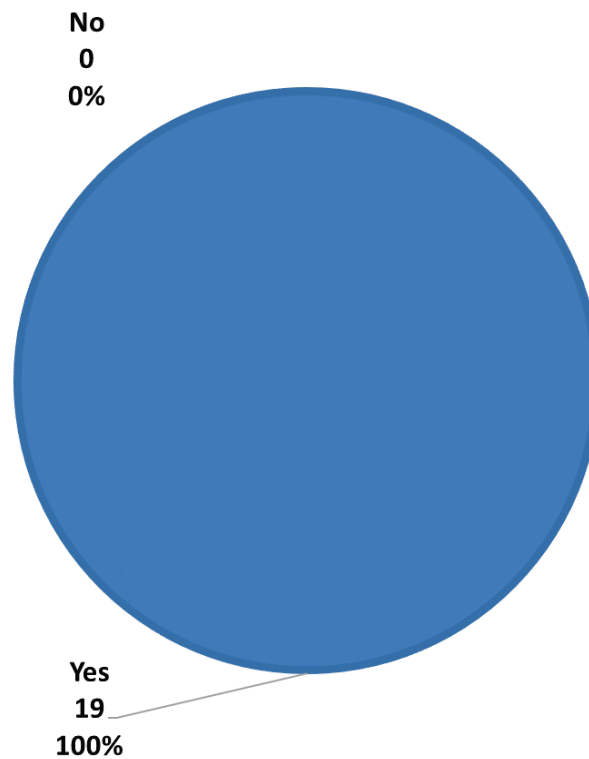
The information provided by those that attended the consultation event show that the most effective method of informing the public about the events were the scheme brochures and social media updates. However, it cannot be differentiated whether those that chose ‘scheme brochure’ were referring to paper versions distributed by post or online versions through the Highways England website. Gaining an understanding of the

most effective method of brochure distribution is something to be considered during future consultations. Radio and poster advertisements can be seen, in this particular instance, to have limited effectiveness in attracting event attendance. This information will be considered when selecting future consultation advertisement methods.

Exit Survey Question 3 asked for opinions on the usefulness of the information provided at the consultation events.

Figure 10 shows the responses provided.

EXIT SURVEY Q3 - WAS THE INFORMATION PROVIDED USEFUL?



19 responses to this question. Two surveys contained no response.

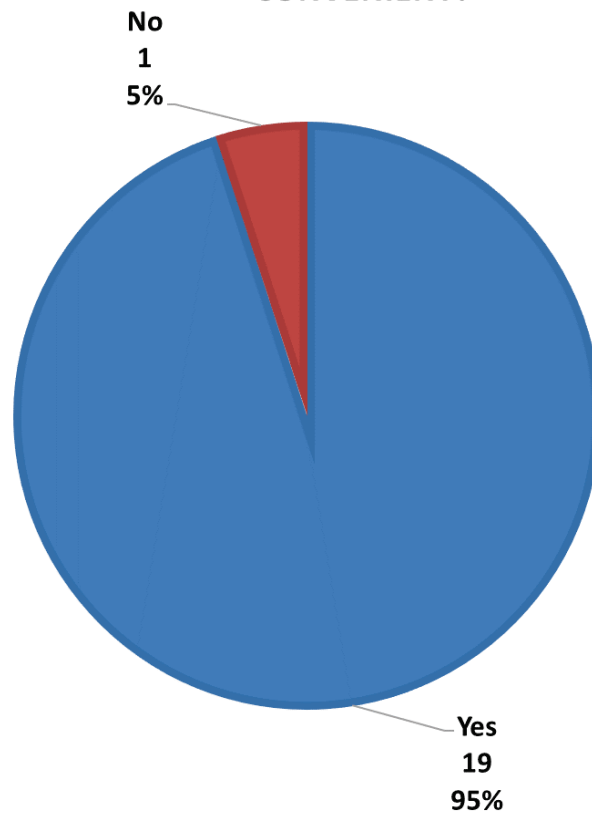
Figure 10 Quality of information

Respondents who answered the question, stated the information provided was useful which is a positive endorsement of the exhibition material. In the future it may be useful to ask attendees more specifically about which elements of the exhibition material they find most useful, in order to gain better information from the feedback.

Exit Survey Question 4 was aimed at gaining opinions on the convenience of the event location for local residents.

Figure 11 shows the responses provided.

EXIT SURVEY Q4 - DID YOU FIND THE EVENT / LOCATION OF THE EVENT CONVENIENT?



20 responses to this question. One survey contained no response.

Figure 11 Opinion on convenience of event location

The majority of completed surveys (95%) agreed that the location of the events was convenient. One of the completed surveys stated it was not a convenient location and suggested a further venue in Beeston Village would have been of benefit.

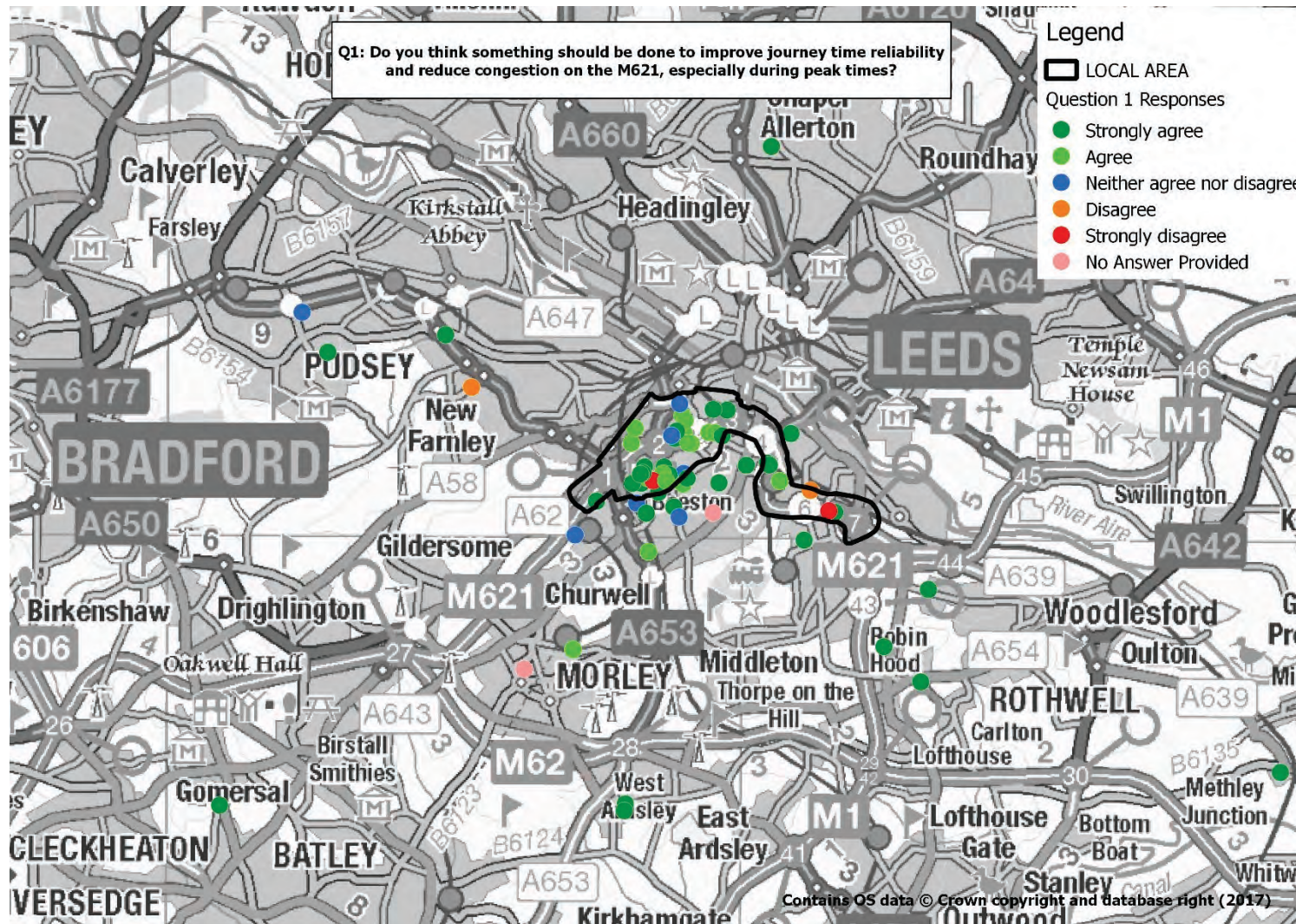
A5 – MAPPED QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

This Appendix contains graphics showing the geographic distribution of respondents to some of the questions.

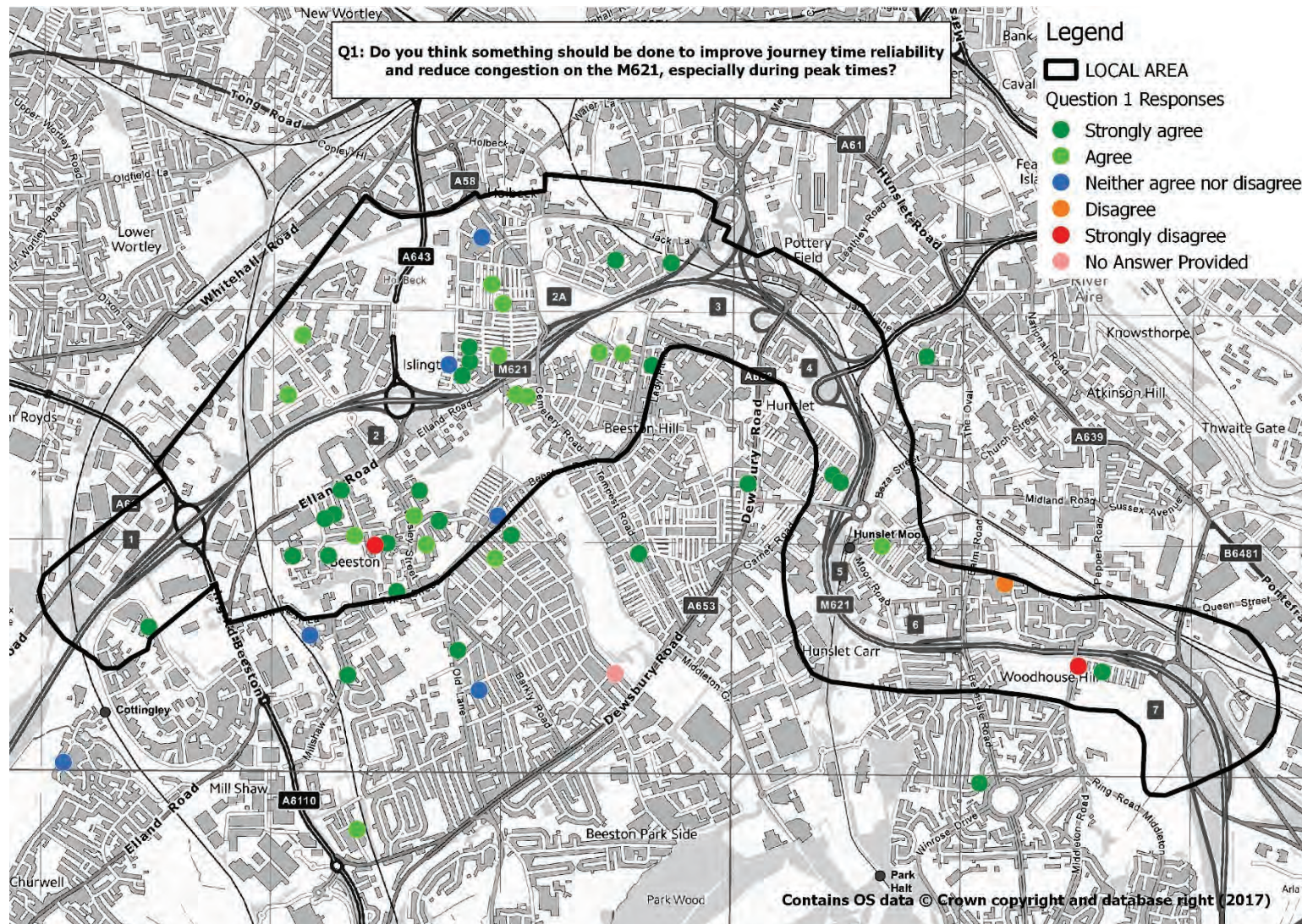
Images are presented for the following four consultation questions:

- **Q1 - Opinion on congestion and journey time reliability on the M621;**
- **Q2 - Preferred scheme option;**
- **Q5 - Support for closing M621 junction 2a westbound;**
- **Q10 - Attendance at a consultation event.**

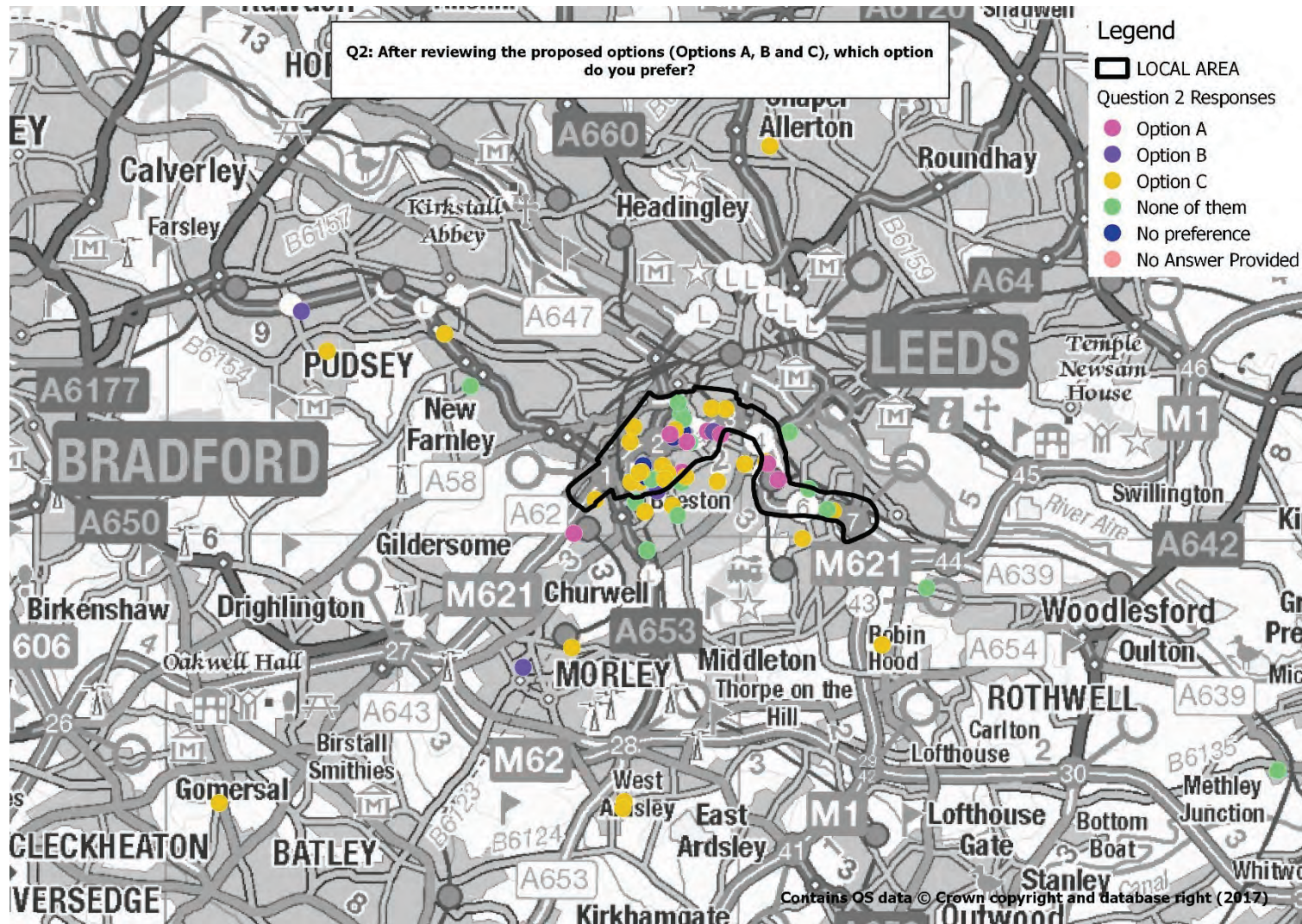
For each question, two graphics have been saved at different zoom scales.



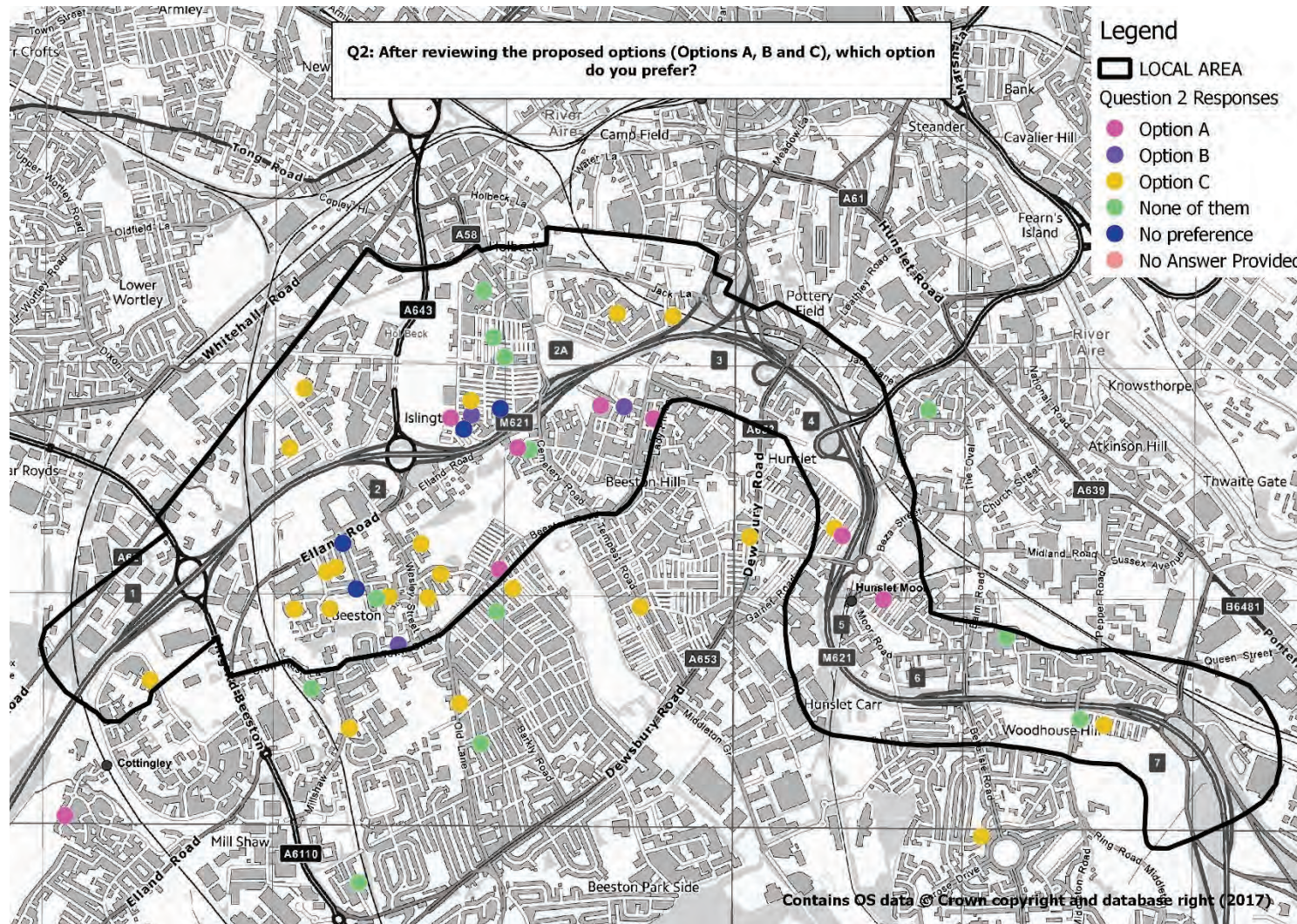
Q1 - Opinion on congestion and journey time reliability on the M621 – wider plan



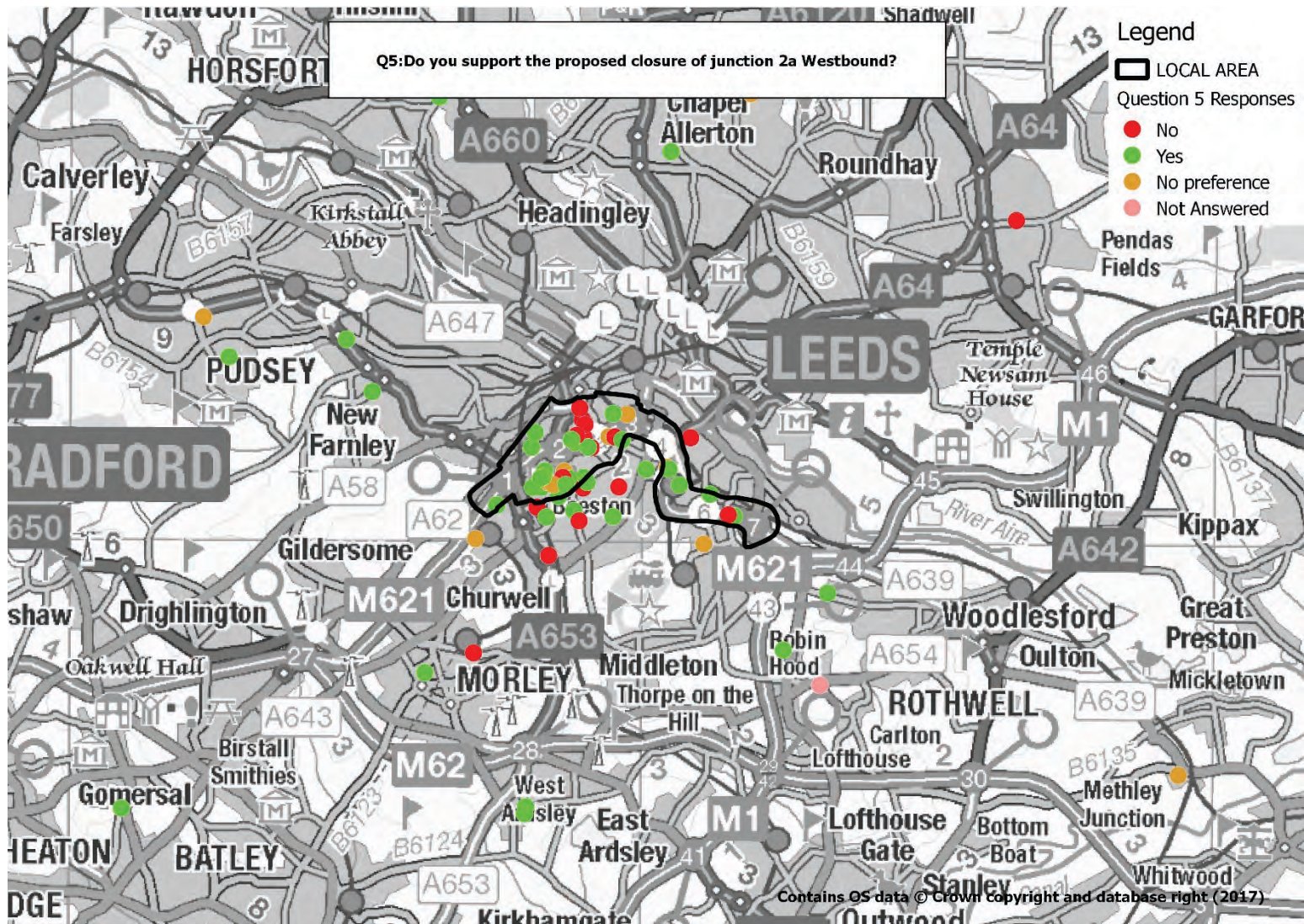
Q1 - Opinion on congestion and journey time reliability on the M621 – local area plan



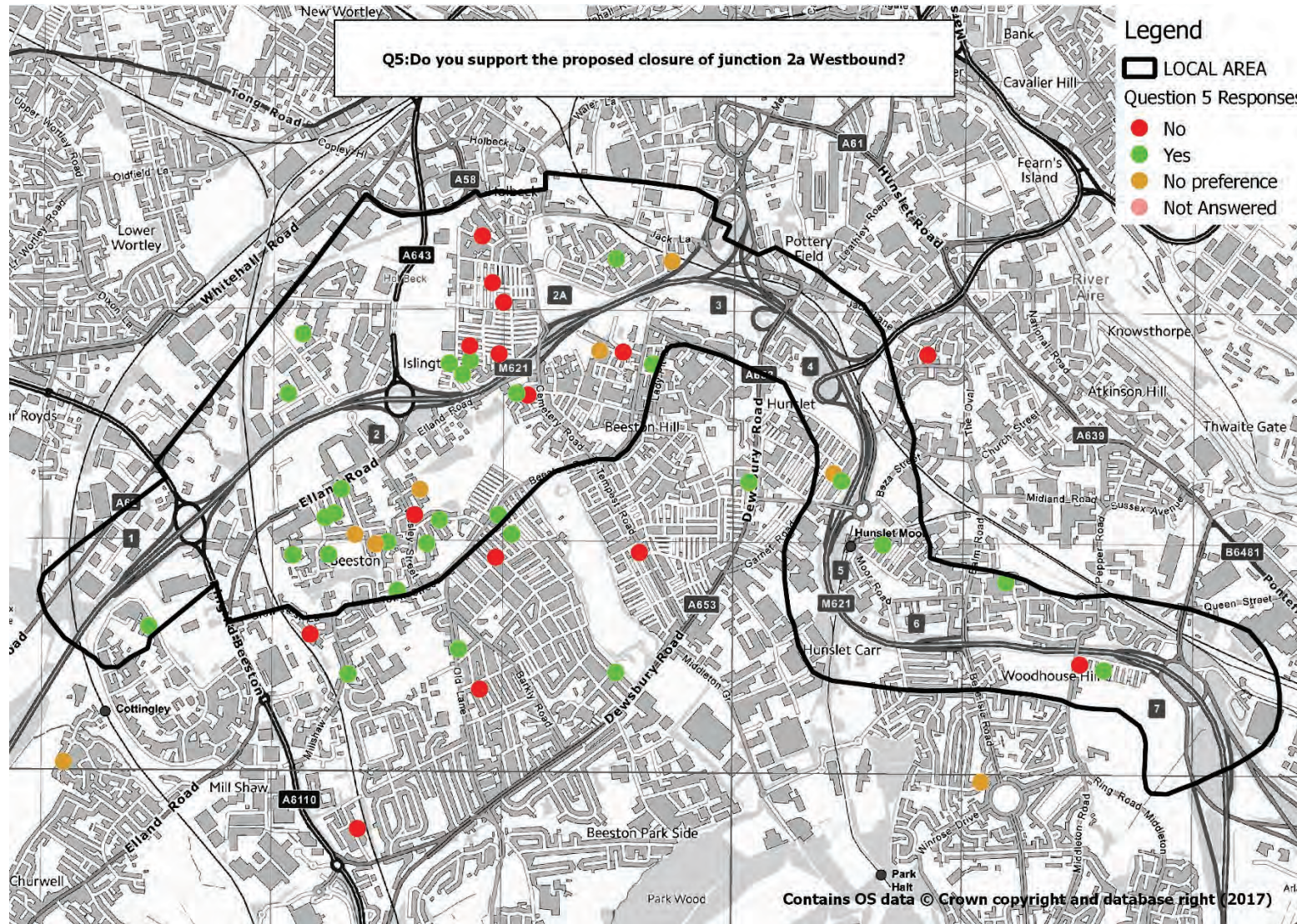
Q2 - Preferred scheme option – wider plan



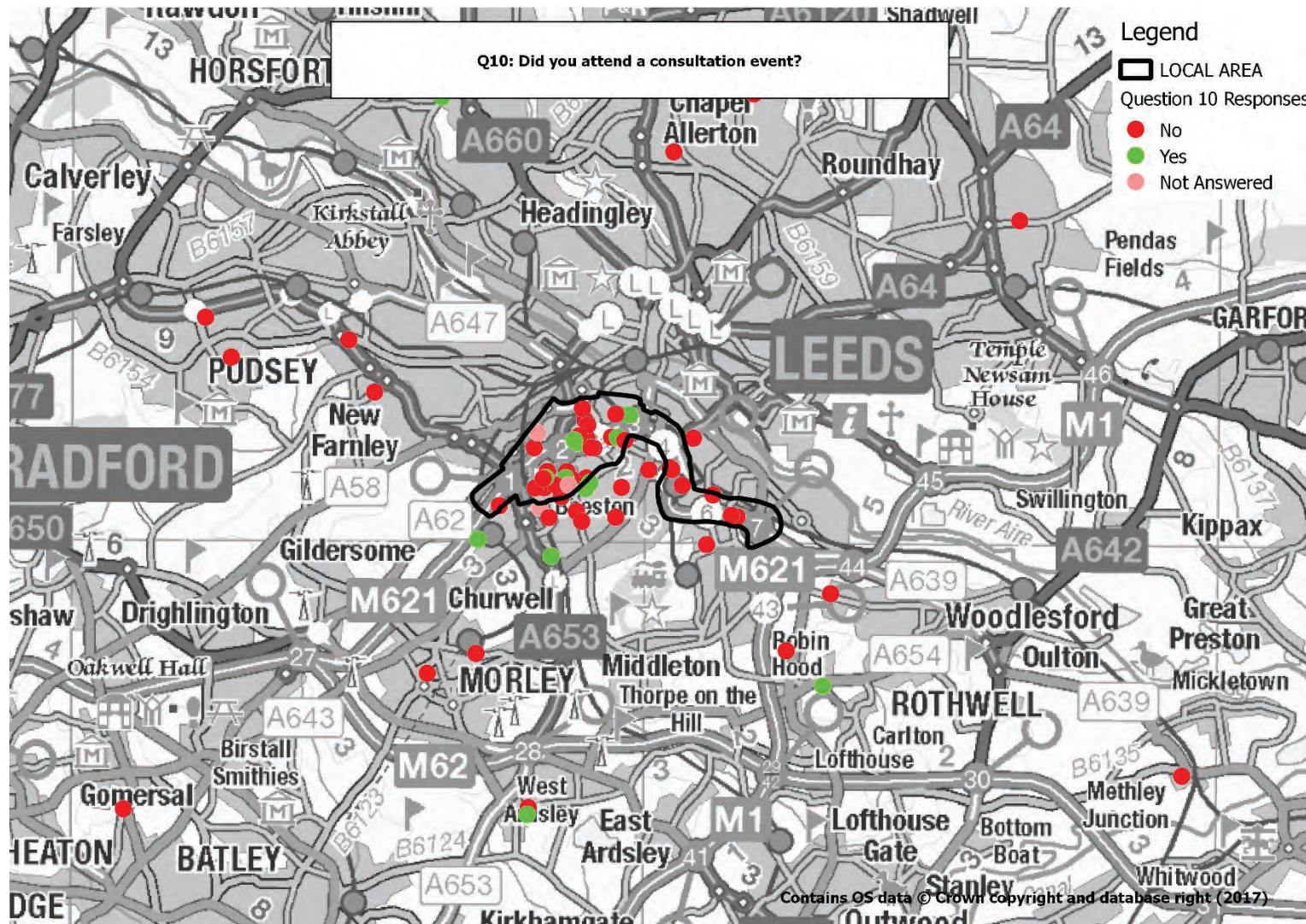
Q2 - Preferred scheme option – local area plan



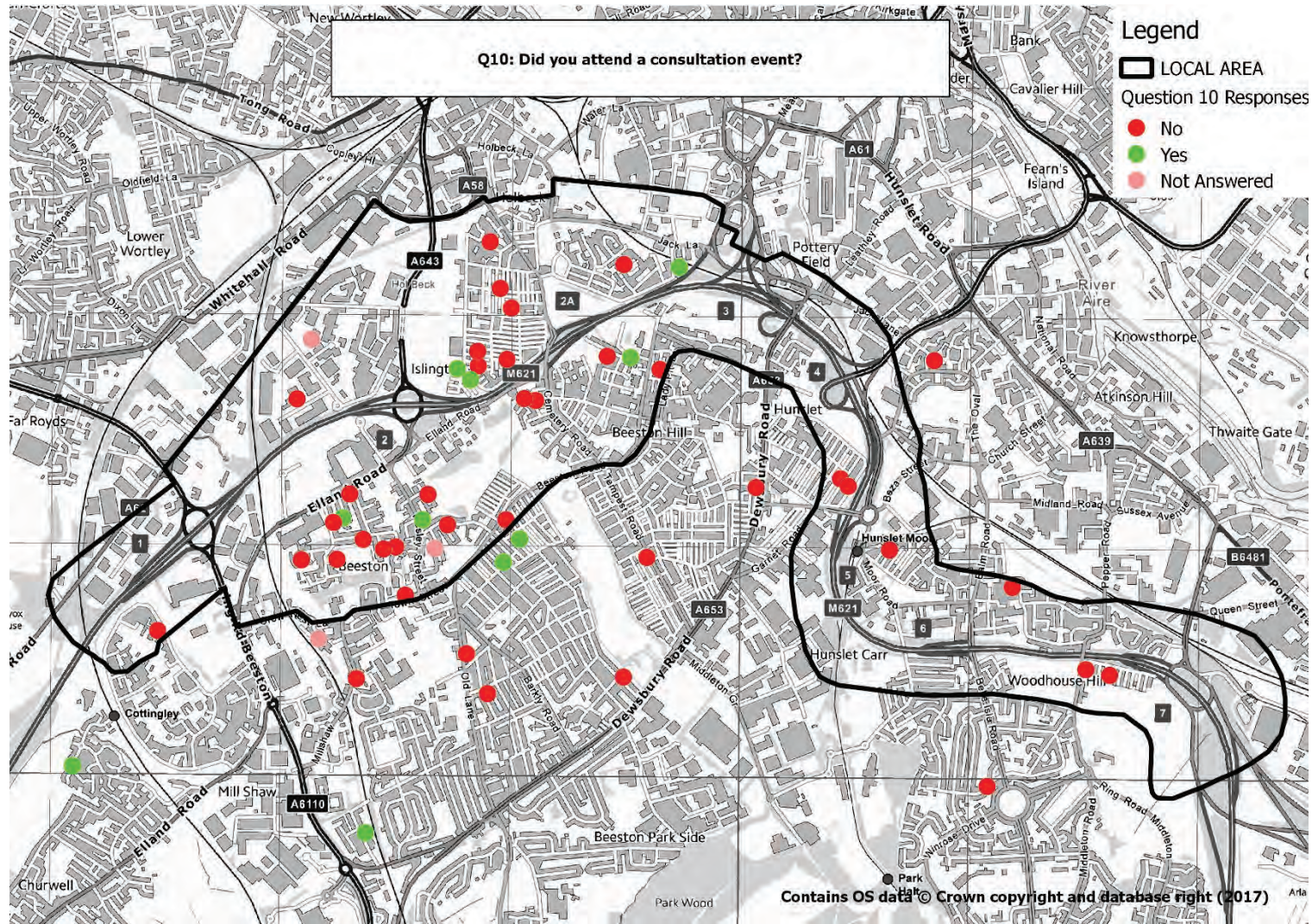
Q5 - Support for closing M621 junction 2a westbound – wider plan



Q5 - Support for closing M621 junction 2a westbound – local area plan



Q10 - Attendance at a consultation event – wider plan



Q10 - Attendance at a consultation event – local area plan

A6 – SUMMARY OF HIGHWAYS ENGLAND’S RESPONSES

This Appendix contains responses to the consultation from members of the public which were received in the form of letters and emails. This Appendix does not include comments received through returned questionnaires.

Public comments via email and letters.	Highways England response
<p>Closure of junction 2a eastbound</p> <p>“Please could I ask why it is not possible to close junction 2a Eastbound? In the same way you plan to close 2a westbound.”</p>	<p>In relation to junction 2a the reason for proposing the closure on the westbound carriageway is to enable us to safely implement our proposed improvements at junction 3. This will help us to address the cause of congestion currently experienced in this location. We are also proposing improvements at junction 2 to help compensate for the additional traffic that will have to use this junction as a result of the closure.</p> <p>When we were in the very early stages of developing potential options to address the issues on the M621, we did consider closing junction 2a on the eastbound carriageway. However, we do need to take account of the potential impact of such closures and unfortunately early assessments showed that this did not present value for money as the impact of closing this junction had a significant impact on congestion on the surround local road network.</p>
<p>Option B</p> <p>“May I suggest lane 1 is a continuous on/off slip between junctions 1 and 2 in both directions? If you are in the new proposed lane 3 at junction 2 it will be almost impossible to get over to lane 1 in time to exit for junction 1 given the high volume of traffic between these locations. It will also remove the need for cars to move over to let junction 2 traffic on as is current and then move back over immediately to exit for junction 1 close by.”</p>	<p>In relation to our proposals in Option B, our current design would be for the new third lane, as you suggest, to be a continuation of the slip road which joins at junction 1 and the lane would leave the M621 as part of the slip road at junction 2 (we refer to this as a lane gain/drop arrangement).</p> <p>I hope this has addressed your questions, but please feel free to attend one of our public consultation exhibitions if you would like to find out more about the scheme or discuss any issues further with the project team.</p>
<p>Junction 2 Roundabout</p> <p>“Can I ask if in the changes to this roundabout in the proposal there</p>	<p>Our designs are currently at a very early stage of development; at the moment our proposals do not include the provision of signals from Elland Road on to junction 2. However, we are currently</p>

Public comments via email and letters.	Highways England response
<p>would be traffic lights added to allow traffic joining the roundabout from Elland road easier access, particularly at peak times? Currently, with this part of the roundabout not traffic lighted, but all other entry points under traffic light control, it can take a considerable amount of time to get onto the roundabout at anything resembling peak times, causing the traffic to back up to the traffic lights at the Wesley Street junction (by the stadium) and beyond, which makes commuting out of Beeston particularly hard. Traffic lighting all entrances to the roundabout would help alleviate this problem. Also regarding the closure of the exit at junction 2a, what is the proposed alternative route for traffic wishing to leave at this junction for Beeston Hill/Beeston as this junction is frequently used and therefore its closure will have implications for other routes in the area.”</p>	<p>consulting the public on our proposals to help us identify local information, issues and concerns. The consultation is ongoing throughout September and closes on 15 October; once we have received all feedback from the public and key stakeholders we will review the comments to help us select a preferred option. We will also consider the issues and suggestions provided and, where possible, take account of them as we develop our design.</p> <p>With regards to the proposed closure of junction 2a and the alternative route for junction 2a traffic, although we are still undertaking traffic assessments to help us understand the impacts of the proposed closure, it is anticipated most traffic will use junction 2. However, some people wishing to access the east side of Beeston might prefer to use junction 3. The proposed improvements to junction 2 will increase its capacity, enabling the predicted additional increase in traffic from junction 2a to use it effectively.</p>
<p>Junction 2a and 3 westbound</p> <p>“In respect of junction 3 westbound. The proposed design isn't really suitable local public transport buses that join at that junction and leave at junction 2. This is because the gradient of the incline from the City Centre means that they can't build up speed to match traffic coming from the direction of junction 4. The current layout serves as a means of reducing the speed of traffic from that direction. My suggested alternative would be to leave the slip-road from the City Centre as two lanes then create a merge of lane 2 on the M621 with lane 1 of the slip-road.”</p>	<p>Thank you for your response to our consultation on the M621 Junctions 1 to 7 Improvement Scheme. Your response has been logged and will be included in our consultation.</p> <p>Our website will be kept up to date with scheme progress and we will publish a consultation report, summarising the outcome of the consultation, after our consultation period has ended and we have analysed all the responses. You can access the scheme webpage using the following link: www.highways.gov.uk/m621j1-7.</p>
<p>Junction 3 westbound</p>	<p>Our design is at a very early stage of development</p>

Public comments via email and letters.	Highways England response
<p>“I see you plan to reduce the junction 3 on-slip to one lane. This means all traffic entering here will naturally be in the "fast" lane 3 when they enter the motorway, with HGV's, busses etc. having no choice but to be in lane 3 at the start. Firstly is it not illegal for HGVs to be in lane 3 of a motorway?</p> <p>Secondly any vehicle that enters at junction 3 and wishes to leave at junction 2 (which is a very short distance away) is going to have to move across two lanes of busy traffic - in many instances the heavy traffic volume and the short distance will result in either risky manoeuvres or an impossibility to exit at junction 2. Has this been considered?</p> <p>Thirdly - traffic already on the M621 is likely to be travelling faster than the traffic entering at junction 3. So you will have a situation where traffic in lanes 1 and 2 is travelling faster than in lane 3. This could become dangerous.”</p>	<p>and therefore these plans will be subject to change as a result of the consultation and further assessments currently underway. In summary, the free flowing connections between the M621 and A643 on the eastbound carriageway will allow traffic to flow more freely between the two roads.</p> <p>Regarding your comments about junction 3, this is something we have considered carefully and we will continue to assess as we develop our design. Our proposals do include the provision of average speed cameras along this section of the network, to help ensure that traffic already travelling on the M621 is not exceeding the 50mph speed limit, reducing the likelihood of M621 traffic travelling at high speeds when traffic merges at junction 3. In addition, we believe the closure of junction 2a is necessary to stop traffic weaving across two lanes in such a short distance, which we believe would be an unsafe manoeuvre. However, assessments so far have shown the distance between junctions 3 and 2 (approximately 900m), will be sufficient for traffic to manoeuvre in to the correct lane should they wish to exit the motorway at junction 2.</p> <p>With regards to HGVs using lane 3 of the motorway, due to sections of the M621 having only two lanes (sometimes with/without dedicated lanes for exiting at specific junctions) there is already a relaxation in place allowing HGVs to use any lane on sections of the M621. Our proposals would retain this relaxation which will allow HGVs to join the outside lane at junction 3 as well as allow an opportunity for HGVs to move over in to lanes 1 or 2 of the motorway. HGVs form a low percentage of the overall traffic using the M621 particularly westbound at junction 3 (compared to motorway averages) and this is specifically related to those HGVs that will join at junction 3. However as mentioned above, our design is at an early stage and we will continue to review as the scheme progresses.</p> <p>In addition to the above we are also proposing the provision of technology along the route which will help to keep road users better informed of incidents on the network and improve safety. This will allow us to display advisory speed limits when traffic</p>

Public comments via email and letters.	Highways England response
	<p>volumes increase and close lanes in the event of an incident</p>
<p>Continuation of the above conversation 'junction 3 westbound'</p> <p>"I am not convinced at all that 900m is sufficient time to move from lane 3 to lane 1 to exit at junction 2, even if cameras are in place. When traffic flow from the M621 is heavy and traffic is backed-up in lane 1 queuing to exit at junction 2, it will be almost impossible to move across safely in time.</p> <p>May I suggest... junction 3 is kept as two lanes (as it is). Subsequently only 1 lane becomes free-flowing from the M621 and the other proposed free-flow lane becomes a give-way at junction 3 (as is current). This will mean traffic from junction 3 will only have to move across one lane to exit at junction 2. I would suggest this will be much safer and will not significantly compromise traffic flow coming from the M621. It just means one lane will have to give-way. Please can you see my attached diagram, so you can visualise what I mean.</p> <p>With regards to junction 2 I am happy with what I see and also support the closure of 2a westbound. However, I would also support the closure of 2a eastbound if you proposed it."</p>	<p>Following assessment and feedback from key stakeholders we consider that the new layout at junction 3 and the closure of junction 2a represents the most suitable option for the scheme. However, I will address your points one-by-one to explain in more detail the rationale behind these proposals.</p> <p>Firstly, regarding the proximity of junction 3 and junction 2, we consulted with a range of industry specialists to seek the most appropriate layout. The 900m distance is within a section limited to 50mph (which will be better enforced by the introduction of average speed cameras) and therefore provides drivers around 40 seconds to complete the manoeuvre and leave the M621 at junction 2 westbound. It was felt this provides sufficient time and betterment versus the current situation. Currently vehicles can join at junction 3 and leave the network at junction 2a with only around 150m, albeit only across one lane. In addition, the junction 2 westbound off-slip is also being modified to provide additional capacity and assist in alleviating queuing in this section.</p> <p>In terms of the road layout at junction 3, the priority is being shifted towards the mainline traffic, as this sees a higher traffic flow than the slip road and the current reduction to one lane is the cause of significant congestion during peak periods. Therefore, two free flowing lanes on the M621 mainline and one lane on the slip represents a more appropriate road layout than the current situation based on the assessments we have undertaken.</p> <p>The closure of junction 2a eastbound was also considered in the very early stages of developing potential options. However early assessments showed this did not present value for money as the impact of closing this junction had a significant impact upon congestion on the surrounding local network.</p>
<p>Continuation of the above conversation 'junction 3</p>	<p>With regards to your proposed design a junction 3 I</p>

Public comments via email and letters.	Highways England response
<p>westbound'</p> <p>“Indeed, you may have 40 secs to complete the manoeuvre, but you are not taking into consideration that in this 40secs you have to attempt to cross two lanes of what will be very heavy traffic. At peak time that will be almost impossible and at the very least unsafe.</p> <p>May I ask why a layout such as the one I have suggested in the attached picture would not be appropriate? This layout still allows for two lanes of free flow from the main M621 (as you propose), but also allows traffic from the junction 3 on-slip to enter in lane two and then only have to change over one lane (instead of 2) to exit at junction 2.</p> <p>I firmly believe reducing junction 3 from two lanes to one is a bad idea.”</p>	<p>have set out below our initial concerns.</p> <p>As previously mentioned, the M621 currently has higher traffic flows than the westbound junction 3 slip road and we expect this will increase in future (a key aim of our project is to help relieve congestion in this location). If we were to implement your proposals, the additional lane created on the mainline would be a Give Way junction with the slip road. (It should be noted that it is not currently a Give Way, as per your email, instead the M621 mainline has reduced to one lane before merging with the slip road via an auxiliary lane). It would be very unusual to implement a Give Way junction on a carriageway/lane which has the predominate traffic flow. This arrangement would ultimately still give priority to the slip road traffic and not fully address the congestion issue in this location.</p> <p>However, we are still undertaking traffic assessments which will ensure we take account of the planned developments around Leeds to help us predict how traffic journeys will change in the future. When we have completed this assessment work we will need to review our design to ensure it is suitable for the predicted traffic flows. When we review our design, we will consider your proposals again to see if our current concerns remain valid or whether your proposal offers a suitable solution</p>
<p>Elland Road</p> <p>“Whilst I can appreciate the safety element to the closure of the westbound exit slip road at junction 2a of the M621 at the junction of Cemetery Road/Elland Road. Have the residents of this area been considered?”</p> <p>“Many people not, not knowing the area, treat this stretch as one-way from Cemetery Road/roundabout slip road. There have been several accidents needing ambulances/hospital treatment and numerous near misses.”</p> <p>A proposal was made to add “arrow road markings at Cemetery</p>	<p>I can assure you, local residents are being considered which is why we are targeting the local area in this consultation. This is the first time we have presented our options to the general public and, as the proposals are at an early stage of development, there is genuine opportunity for the public to input into them. I hope this is reflected by the fact you received our brochure and that we reply to any direct correspondence from residents.</p> <p>Regarding your other comments about your safety concerns at the junction of Cemetery Road and Elland Road, this part of the network is currently under the ownership of Leeds City Council. However, as our scheme progresses we will consider potential impacts on the local road network when we develop or design. If our assessments</p>

Public comments via email and letters.	Highways England response
<p>Road/Elland Road junction or two-way traffic signs erected”</p>	<p>show that our scheme will have an impact upon this junction, or other parts of the local road network, we will work with Leeds City Council to investigate potential solutions</p>
<p>Junction 2a on-slip</p> <p>“I’ve got some concerns with regards to option C of the proposals. Would you be able to confirm if the proposed on slip at junction 2a would meet current road design standards or has this not been checked/departure from standard will be applied for?”</p>	<p>We are currently at the very early stages of developing our designs; we have conducted an outline assessment with junction layouts being reviewed using draft forecast traffic flows. On an outline design basis, there is sufficient space to accommodate the proposed junction layout. This takes into consideration the 50mph speed limit and the urban nature of the scheme. However, we are still undertaking traffic assessments and will need to review this as our updated traffic forecast data becomes available.</p> <p>If Option C is selected as the preferred route, further design work will be carried out to finalise the junction layout and geometry. If a departure from standard is required at this stage, then this will be applied for and we will have discussions with the safety specialists as we progress the scheme to finalise the most appropriate solution.</p>
<p>Consultation Awareness</p> <p>“I watched this announcement on BBC Look North this last week 04 to 08 September 2017.</p> <p>No mention was given about where the ‘series of events’ were and when to be held for ‘people to come along’ to ‘meet the Team’ and ‘find out about the Scheme’.</p> <p>I have now searched your website. Tuff if you do not have access to it.</p> <p>I consider the number of locations and number of sessions extremely poor, and too parochial. I also consider in adequate notice of these events too short. Consultation with the wider public are absent.</p> <p>As I live outside the area, and not</p>	<p>Thank you for your email. I’m glad you have become aware of our proposals via the media exposure, which has been generated recently.</p> <p>I’m sorry you are disappointed with the level of detail included in the Look North news item, unfortunately although we provide all of the details to the media we are not able to influence the level of detail they include in their publications and/or how the information is presented.</p> <p>We have issued over 7,800 leaflets to residents and businesses in close proximity to our scheme and have published the consultation with the wider public via a number of channels including the media (Look North, Yorkshire Evening Post, Huddersfield Examiner, Radio Aire and BBC Radio Leeds as well as other publications have all run items on our proposals/consultation recently), social media and sharing posters and electronic materials with the surrounding local authorities.</p> <p>I’m sorry you are unable to attend any of the planned exhibitions but these are planned in the</p>

Public comments via email and letters.	Highways England response
<p>possible to attend any of these sessions, I do however use the M621 very frequently, and wish to be more acquainted with your proposals, as I am extremely concerned about them, particularly in safety terms.</p> <p>Please provide more events outside the locality for the wider population and users.</p> <p>Please provide me with the direct electronic link to the scheme drawing proposals.”</p>	<p>communities which will be directly affected by our proposals and the locations were agreed in discussion with Leeds City Council. All of our materials are available online to enable those who are unable to attend events to still participate in the consultation. An electronic copy of our consultation brochure and questionnaire can be found here (link provided) which show our scheme proposals. A hard copy has also been sent to you in today’s post to the address in your email.</p> <p>We are currently at an early stage in our design process and this is a non-statutory consultation on our conceptual designs to help us select a preferred option. Once we have selected a preferred option we will develop our design further and hold another statutory consultation, we will review the outputs of this initial consultation when planning future events to ensure we receive as many responses from the public as possible. If, in the meantime, you have any specific queries regarding our proposals please let me know and we will endeavour to answer them.</p>
<p>Junction 3 to junction 2 westbound</p> <p>“In general your proposals are very good,</p> <p>I have concerns about the junction 3 proposal allowing traffic to merge from the right, especially when traffic will accelerate on to the outer lane from the main M621 carriageway to past slower more hesitant traffic as soon as the lane becomes available is an accident waiting to happen, UK drivers are not used to merging into fast flowing traffic on their left hand side, with many drivers not set up for that type of manoeuvre.</p> <p>I don't see the benefit of closing junction 2a as it will affect access to many local businesses, I would prefer to see it kept available but with a shorter decelerating lane.</p> <p>A consideration to improve safety around junctions 2, 2a and 3 would be</p>	<p>Regarding your comments about junction 3, you are right, this is an unusual arrangement on our network but it is something we have considered carefully and we will continue to assess as we develop our design. We believe the closure of junction 2a is necessary to stop traffic weaving across two lanes from junction 3 in such a short distance, which we believe (and assessments so far demonstrate) would be an unsafe manoeuvre.</p> <p>Our proposals do include the provision of average speed cameras along this section of the network, to help ensure that traffic already travelling on the M621 is not exceeding the 50mph speed limit, reducing the likelihood of M621 traffic travelling at high speeds when traffic merges at junction 3.</p> <p>In addition to the above we are also proposing the provision of technology along the route which will help to keep road users better informed of incidents on the network and improve safety. This will allow us to display advisory speed limits when traffic volumes increase and close lanes in the event of an incident.</p>

Public comments via email and letters.	Highways England response
<p>to have camera controlled speed restrictions to around 40mph through the hazard area.”</p>	
<p>Public transport use of junction 2a “The buses (51, 52, Park and Ride etc.) use this junction to exit the motorway. Will this mean they cut out any stops along there? Has an alternate arrangement been made?”</p>	<p>We are currently consulting on our scheme proposals; once we have selected a preferred option we will consult with bus operators and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA, formerly Metro) to understand the impact upon existing bus services and determine alternatives routes. At this early stage I cannot confirm that the services will still stop at the exactly the same locations but maintaining the same level of service to the community will be a key focus. Any changes to bus services will be communicated once we have developed our plans further.</p>
<p>Estimated Construction Period “Two years is a long time- I can foresee problems getting to work early when the speed limit is lowered during work. What will happen to the closed junction 2a? Could it be planted up with trees to absorb pollution or maybe solar panels to generate electricity?”</p>	<p>We haven’t developed our construction programme for the scheme at the moment and the duration will vary depending on which option we take forward. At this stage our estimation is that the construction period will be approximately two years, but we will look for opportunities to shorten this wherever possible. We will endeavour to keep disruption to a minimum during construction by keeping lanes open during peak periods. When we develop our construction plans we will assess how best to construct the scheme whilst ensuring the road remains as safe as possible for both road users and our construction staff. This may mean we need to reduce the speed limit during construction, but as the road is already 50mph this may not be as noticeable as when the speed limit is reduced elsewhere on the network. We will be able to provide more information regarding our construction plans closer to the time.</p> <p>In relation to junction 2a, we are looking at how we might utilise this space. We are considering if the space can be used to enhance the local environment or mitigate any potential environmental impacts of our proposals. Again, this is in the very early stages, but landscaping the area is certainly a consideration. Once we have a preferred option and can develop our design further, we will make some</p>

Public comments via email and letters.	Highways England response
	proposals for this space. This will be followed by a statutory public consultation, where we will present our proposals to the public again.

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